1	UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT		
2	CENTRAL DISTRICT OF CALIFORNIA		
3	WESTERN DIVISION		
4			
5	HONORABLE MAAME EWUSI-MENSAH FRIMPONG, DISTRICT JUDGE PRESIDING		
6			
7	UNITED STATES OF AMERICA,)		
8	Plaintiffs,)		
9))		
10	vs.) No. 23-00059-MEMF		
11))		
12	CAROLINE J. HERRLING,)		
13	Defendant.)		
14			
15	REPORTER'S TRANSCRIPT OF PROCEEDINGS		
16	SENTENCING [79]		
17	LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA		
18	FRIDAY, MARCH 15,2024		
19			
20			
21	MARIA R. BUSTILLOS OFFICIAL COURT REPORTER C.S.R. 12254 UNITED STATES COURTHOUSE		
22			
23	350 WEST 1ST STREET SUITE 4455		
24	LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA 90012 (213) 894-2739		
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1	INDEX	
2		PAGE
3	SENTENCING HEARING [79]:	4
4		
5		
6		
7		
8		
9		
10		
11		
12		
13		
14		
15		
16		
17		
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23		
24		
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          LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA; FRIDAY, MARCH 15, 2024
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                   (COURT IN SESSION AT 2:07 P.M.)
 4
               THE COURTROOM DEPUTY: Calling item two,
 5
     LA CR 23-00059-MEMF: United States of America v.
      Caroline Joanne Herrling.
 6
 7
               Counsel, please stand and state your
 8
      appearances, please.
 9
               MR. BROWN: Good afternoon, Your Honor.
10
     Andrew Brown for the Government. With me at counsel
11
     table are the two case agents, LAPD Detective
12
     Mark O'Donald and Postal Inspector Lyndon Versoza.
13
               MR. KESSEL: Good afternoon, Your Honor.
14
     Attorney Alex Kessel. I'm present with my client,
15
     Ms. Herrling.
16
               THE COURT: Good afternoon to counsel.
     Good afternoon, Ms. Kessel -- Ms. Herrling. Good to see
17
18
     you. Good afternoon to the agents. Could I see counsel
19
     briefly at sidebar off the record?
20
                     (Sidebar off the record.)
21
               THE COURT: Okay. We are on the record. And
22
     we're here for the sentencing in this matter. And I
23
     understand that we have one individual,
24
     Miracle Williams, who will joining us via Zoom. The
25
     clerk will advise me as soon as she's on the Zoom.
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1
     my understanding, we don't have anybody on the Zoom
 2
      right now.
 3
               Okay. So with that, Ms. Herrling, I appreciate
 4
      this is probably a difficult day for you. Let me
 5
     explain what's going to happen: I'm going to go over
 6
     everything that I've reviewed. There's a lot of
 7
     material I've reviewed in this case. And I'm going to
 8
     hear from both parties regarding the guidelines
 9
      calculation and regarding the sentence. And then I'll
10
     make my sentencing guidelines calculation. I'll resolve
11
      a number of the disputes that the parties have about the
12
     quidelines calculation. And while I'm hearing from the
13
     parties, I'll hear from you, as well, if you wish to be
14
     heard. And after I make the sentencing guidelines
15
     calculation, I'll take probably a 10- to 15-minute
16
     recess to make sure I've considered what everything has
      said this afternoon with respect to the sentence, and
17
18
      then I'll return to announce the sentence.
19
               If at any point, you need a break or you need
20
     to speak privately with Mr. Kessel, then please
21
      interrupt me or ask Mr. Kessel to interrupt me,
22
     understood?
23
               THE DEFENDANT: Yes.
24
               THE COURT: Okay. Thank you. Okay. So,
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Counsel, I have read and considered the following, which

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1
      includes the position papers filed by the parties and
 2
      any other documents provided -- just a moment -- so I
 3
     have considered the presentence report, which is found
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     at ECF 37; the revised presentence report found at
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     ECF 55; the addendum to the presentence report found at
     ECF 56; probation's recommendation found at ECF 36. I'm
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 7
     going to need to close the courtroom at this moment to
 8
     discuss confidential material. So I'm going to ask that
 9
      the clerk close the Zoom, and also close the courtroom.
10
     And I am going to ask that any members of the public
11
     that are present, exit the courtroom, and we'll reopen
12
     the courtroom when we are no longer in the sealed
13
     proceeding.
14
                (Sealed proceeding filed separately.)
15
                (Whereupon, the record is unsealed:)
16
               Okay. Mr. Kessel, have you had enough time to
17
      read all of these documents and review them with your
18
      client?
19
               MR. KESSEL: I have, Your Honor.
20
               THE COURT: Did you explain their contents to
21
     her?
22
               MR. KESSEL: We went over the documents, yes.
23
               THE COURT:
                           Okay. And let me just ask you to
24
      speak into the microphone. If you want to remain seated
      for these preliminary questions, that's fine.
25
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1
               MR. KESSEL: It's just a habit, Your Honor.
               THE COURT: Yeah, no, it's fine. I will --
               MR. KESSEL: I have reviewed all the documents
 3
 4
      with my client.
 5
               THE COURT: Okay. And you explained them to
 6
     her?
 7
               MR. KESSEL: Yes.
 8
               THE COURT: Okay. Do you have any concerns
 9
      about her ability to understand them?
10
               MR. KESSEL: None whatsoever.
               THE COURT: Okay. And then, Counsel, if you
11
12
      could pull the microphone -- the -- in front of
13
      Ms. Herrling, if you can pull that towards her. She can
      pull it, thank you. Ms. Herrling, did you receive all
14
15
      of those documents that I mentioned?
16
               THE DEFENDANT: Yes.
17
               THE COURT: And did you read them?
18
               THE DEFENDANT: Yes.
19
               THE COURT: Do you need anymore time to read
20
      them?
21
               THE DEFENDANT:
                               No.
22
               THE COURT: Did your attorney explain them to
23
     you?
24
               THE DEFENDANT: Yes, he did.
25
               THE COURT: Did you understand them?
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THE DEFENDANT: Yes, I did.
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THE COURT: Okay. Turning to Defense counsel, and maybe you want to take the podium at this time...

Yes. The portion of the transcript from when I reopened the courtroom is unsealed.

Thank you.

Okay. So, Mr. Kessel, normally, I would ask if there is anything you want to change or contest in the presentence report, and I do understand that you have a number of objections. As I indicated at sidebar, I do have a list of what I think the various objections and issues are. If it's all right with you, I will walk through the list unless you would prefer to go through it in whatever order you'd prefer you.

MR. KESSEL: No, Your Honor, that's fine.

THE COURT: Okay. Let me start with -- I think one of the preliminary questions or overarching issues, one thing I just want to make clear: I identified for the parties all the things that I reviewed. One of the objections that the Defense had to the Government's position paper was the Government's discussion of how much time a defendant sentenced to a given sentence is likely to serve. And I just wanted to make it clear to the parties that I will not be considering that. I don't think it's appropriate to do so for reasons I can

explain at length, the simplest explanation is the Court's understanding is that most of the items that the Government has identified, the Court understands are Congress' determinations as to good time credit that defendant should receive. So, to this Court, it appears inappropriate for the Court to subvert Congress' intent in giving defendants credit for doing certain things and taking that into account and increasing the sentence on that basis. So I just want it to be clear that the Court is not going to be considering that information.

The next sort of overarching issue I think that we need to address is the standard of proof. And before I move on, I trust the Government doesn't need to be heard on the issue of the -- the time served.

MR. BROWN: No, Your Honor.

THE COURT: Okay. So turning to the issue of the standard of proof: In your papers, Mr. Kessel, you indicate that the standard is clear and convincing. And you cite to a case on that. The Government indicates by citation to various cases and the sentencing guidelines that it should be a preponderance of the evidence standard. Based upon my review, it does appear that it should be a preponderance of the evidence standard, but I did want to give you the opportunity to be heard on that.

MR. KESSEL: I agree in this sense, Your Honor, that having done many, many sentencings, I believe preponderance of the evidence is the normal standard. There is, as I indicated, a Ninth Circuit case that talks about a higher standard of proof when -- when a substantial increase in adjustments, which I think is applicable here, comes into play. That was -- that was the reason I -- I referenced, but I would agree as to a particular adjustment, my main concern was the overall adjustments and their effect on an ultimate sentence, Your Honor, as to standard of proof, and also the argument about the lack of proof to substantiate some of the factual basis that the Government uses to support and, obviously, adopted by Probation, would support some of the adjustments.

THE COURT: Understood. Okay. And I -- thank you for the case law that you provided. The Court's reading of that case law is that where conduct is used, that -- let's get the language of the case: And the case that you cited to was U.S. v. Mezas, M-E-Z-A-S De Jesus, 217 F.3d 638, and just reading from the case, as a general rule at sentencing, due process does not require higher standard of proof than preponderance of the evidence to protect a convicted defendant's liberty interest in the accurate application of the guidelines.

However, when a sentencing factor has an extremely disproportionate effect on the sentence, relative to the offense of conviction, a higher standard of proof may be required. And the facts of that case, obviously, involved a relatively minor crime and then there was an uncharged kidnapping that was added. So in the Court's view, that is not the case here where the sentencing factors have an extremely disproportionate affect on the sentence relative to the offense of conviction within the nature of the offense of conviction and the sentencing factors. So it does appear to the Court that the preponderance of the evidence standard should apply.

Turning to -- I would also just state in case the parties need to be heard on this: At various points, counsel points to the lack of evidence on certain -- of the factors that Probation considered. For clarification, I wasn't sure if you were -- your objection was that the PSR doesn't refer to the evidence or the evidence itself is insufficient.

MR. KESSEL: The latter, Your Honor.

THE COURT: Okay, okay. And I will just say at the outset, I think the parties would agree to me the -- agree with me that at sentencing, hearsay was an indicia of reliability is admissible. Would you agree with

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      that?
               MR. KESSEL: Yes.
 3
               THE COURT: Okay. Okay. So then let's turn to
 4
      what I understand to be the first substantive objection,
 5
      which is that Ms. Herrling should be granted the
      Zero-Point Offender reduction. So let me hear from you
 6
 7
      on that.
               MR. KESSEL: Well, the -- it's a new -- it's a
 8
 9
      new change, and there's, obviously, some prerequisites
10
      that need to be in play and --
               THE COURT: Sorry, Mr. Kessel. Just one
11
12
      moment.
13
               Thank you. So, Mr. Kessel, it appears that the
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      witness that we anticipated is now on the Zoom. We can
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      proceed or if -- if you're okay with us taking a break
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      to hear from her and then she can leave the Zoom. It's
17
      up to you.
18
               MR. KESSEL: Yes, thank you for inquiring, and
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      I don't have an objection, other than, obviously, later
20
      argue the weight of what she's saying, but as to her
21
      ability and to address Court, no objection and to her --
22
      to address the Court now, I have no objection.
23
               THE COURT: Okay. Thank you for that. Okay.
24
               So the clerk will get her on the line.
25
               THE COURTROOM DEPUTY: Ms. Williams, can you
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This is Sheila English, the courtroom Deputy
      hear me?
      Clerk. Unmute your phone. You need to unmute your
      phone in order for us to hear you.
 4
               I think we lost her.
               THE COURT: Okay.
               THE COURTROOM DEPUTY: We lost her.
               THE COURT: Okay. So we're having some
 8
      technical difficulties. Thank you for your patience.
 9
      We'll have you resume, Mr. Kessel, and we'll wait until
10
      there is another appropriate break. I think you were
11
      addressing the Court's question about the Government has
12
      indicated -- Probation has indicated that the Zero-Point
13
      Offender reduction should not apply, because
14
      Ms. Herrling does have criminal history points and, in
15
      addition, she is subject to the leader points as well as
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      the -- the crime purportedly caused a death. I think
      those are their basis. So let me let you be heard.
17
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               MR. KESSEL: As far as the prior criminal
19
      history, Your Honor, I think the Court has always the
20
      option to find that the criminal history, which, as
21
      reported, was a trespass for one point back some time
22
      ago, Your Honor. And that was at least the criminal
23
      history we're asking you to set that aside. It appeared
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      to be a relatively very minor charge and, again, it's
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      remote in time to the events in question here.
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As far as the -- I would agree that -- but if
you look at the statute or the amendment, it has in
there, if there's a leadership role and evidence of a
continuing criminal enterprise, I believe is the
language, which requires a finding that the defendant is
a leader, organizer, or had an aggravating role, which
we contest here. So that has to be determined by the
Court, but there's no indication of a continuing
criminal enterprise. And I looked at that yesterday.
And I think it's in the conjunctive, Your Honor, so both
prerequisites to excluding a defendant has to be proven
at the time. I didn't address the cause -- the -- a
person's death, because I don't think that's the issue
here at all with my client. I know this issue of a
decedent, Mr. Wilding's body, is relevant to -- and, at
least, is involved in a lot of the issues here,
including an appropriate sentence, but there's never
been an allegation at all and no evidence to suggest
that my client caused any death of -- of Mr. Wilding.
         THE COURT: And so just for clarification, with
respect to the not engage in a continuing criminal
enterprise, what is your understanding of why that would
not apply?
         MR. KESSEL: Are you asking me?
         THE COURT: Yes.
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MR. KESSEL: Well, because continuing criminal enterprise, it has a particular meaning, one I would first argue, due process. We have never been at all apprised of the Government's theory that this is a continuing criminal enterprise. Typically, that you see a lot of times in drug offenses with multiple persons charged. You see that, again, to RICO, R-I-C-O, investigations, and indictments, but I have never thought of this, Your Honor, in any sense of a -- of a continuing criminal enterprise. You may see it differently. I'm telling you the lack of notice and, more importantly, I didn't address that in my moving papers, Your Honor. You may find that it is a continuing criminal enterprise, but I want the Defense's objections to be clear both on due process, lack of notice, and any evidence to support a continuing criminal enterprise, as that's defined in the law and I believe under the appropriate statute, which has a separate provision for continuing criminal enterprise. THE COURT: Thank you. And then the death cause -- I think the Government's position is that the death cause is that of Mr. Tascon. MR. KESSEL: Right. Well, I have a lot of concerns with that allegations. I don't think there's

any evidence to suggest that my client directly caused the death as I viewed that as the crime of murder, homicide, in any way, Your Honor.

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As you know, Mr. Tascon apparently, and I've received some of the reports from the state of Texas, I believe, that surround his death. It was deemed to be suicide and as I indicated in our -- I want to get the correct document, Your Honor. It was a reply to one of the Government's papers where they raised, obviously, as an aggravating circumstance, my client's purported causation, if you will, of Mr. Tascon's unfortunate I supplied the Court with the police reports from the Texas authorities, as well as some other individuals who were contacted, and bottom line is with respect to countering the idea that my client had anything to do with that, Mr. Tascon apparently had a history of mental illness. He, apparently, by his own lawyer's admissions to the police -- as listed, again, in the police report, and, Your Honor, it just talked about hearsay being competent at least if it's accurate and at least has indicia of reliability. These police reports were provided to me by the Government. So I have no reason to suggest that they're inaccurate to any degree that the Court can't rely on them, but a couple of things that came out of there, Your Honor, is that --

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and no disrespect to Ms. Williams, this is the purported
wife. And apparently, as an aside, I learned that
Mr. Tascon was also the subject of a restraining order
by another woman, who claimed she was his wife and lived
in the Tascon residence here in the Central District of
California and sought a restraining order against
Mr. Tascon, or the other way around. The point being
that I don't know Ms. Williams' purported status to
Mr. Tascon, but my point is the day he was found shot,
she was nowhere in sight. She had left, apparently, out
of the jurisdiction. One, he had a mental illness that
developed long before the house in California was
fraudulently sold, and I want to use that word
fraudulently sold, because that's uncontested, but more
importantly, Mr. Tascon had previously attempted suicide
apparently by, according to police reports, at one
point, jumping into a river or a creek that was
unsuccessful. And, then, again, in the police reports,
Your Honor, so this is coming -- nothing, but from law
enforcement, the day they interviewed --
         THE COURT: Sorry, Counsel, just for the
record, if you can point to which of your filings has
that police report attached.
        MR. KESSEL: Yes, Your Honor. It's -- I'm
sorry. I want to get you to the document -- it was
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1
      filed under seal, Your Honor. So it doesn't have a
      number. It was filed March 7th, 2024, and it was
 3
      entitled, Defendant's Reply to Government's Sentencing
 4
      Position and Recommendations. I hope that's a
 5
      sufficient reference, Your Honor.
 6
               THE COURT: Yes.
 7
               MR. KESSEL: And it was --
 8
               THE COURT: Exhibit C?
               MR. KESSEL: Correct. And -- and the police
 9
10
      report in question is Exhibit C, Your Honor.
11
               THE COURT: Thank you.
12
               MR. KESSEL: And that's a series of reports.
13
      And at least what I gleaned from that -- and --
14
               THE COURT: And, Counsel, just so that the
15
      record is clear, given what we are discussing right now,
16
      even though this portion was filed under seal, you --
17
      it's acceptable to discuss this in open court?
18
               MR. KESSEL: This particular subject matter, I
19
     have no objections.
20
                          Okay. Please proceed.
               THE COURT:
21
               MR. KESSEL: Thank you, Your Honor.
22
               THE COURT: And so I see that it's ECF -- the
23
      exhibit is ECF 72.
               MR. KESSEL: Thank you, Your Honor.
24
25
               And the upshot, which I think is going to come
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up again, because Mr. Tascon's death and his connection to my client, I think there's a big disconnect,

Your Honor, how unfortunate it is.
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The other thing that the -- that came out of those police reports by interviews of Mr. Tascon's own lawyers or representatives in Texas is that he had an estate that was worth at least \$9,000,000. I say that only because the Government has indicated and speculated, and I think a lot of it is speculation, because we never know why -- if it is suicide, we never know why somebody kills themselves, unless -- I don't know -- I haven't been given in evidence any suicide note where he laid out his state of mind and mental state at the time he took his life enough that we can have some meaning into his intent, but be that as it may, the point is the Government tried to infer that he killed himself, because he lost his only pride possession, which was his house here in California. And I don't think that's necessarily true, because by his own attorney's accounts, Mr. Tascon had a very, very well-funded trust account that he lived off of. And I, again, Mr. Tascon's personal life would probably never come up if the Government -- I'm not saying and rightfully, but they did -- they raised the issue about the nexus between my client and Mr. Tascon's death.

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these are the reasons why with respect to going back to our initial conversation about exclusions from zero criminal history and the defendant causing another's death, Mr. Tascon, I don't believe is supported by the evidence, Your Honor.
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THE COURT: Okay. And just -- just so I want to give you an opportunity to respond to this, because I understood the Government to be arguing -- leaving aside -- well, you've mentioned that he had a \$9 million estate. You've also mentioned that Mr. Tascon was living off of a trust. What I understood the argument to be -- what the Government's argument to be was that the only possession that he had to leave to his wife, Ms. Williams, was this house, and that's what caused him so much distress. That's how I understood it.

And so when you indicate that the estate was \$9 million, you're indicating that that would controvert the idea that he only had the house to leave to her?

MR. KESSEL: I would -- in regard of what the Government's saying, I've never seen -- and I don't know what Mr. Tascon left to Ms. Williams and whether she was even entitled to the house and whether there were, as I indicated, I understood Mr. Tascon might have been married to another woman, first name Olivia, last name I will put in the record K., but -- and who made claims as

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1
     well to Mr. Tascon's property, Your Honor. So I -- I
      can't speak beyond that. I'm only indicating -- and I'm
 2
 3
      trying to address the issue pertinent to my client is
 4
     Ms. Herrling's causation, if you will, of causing
 5
     Mr. Tascon's death.
               THE COURT: Understood. And I think maybe
 6
 7
     Ms. Herrling wanted to address you briefly.
 8
               MR. KESSEL: I think she wanted to send me a
 9
     note here.
10
               Thank you, Your Honor.
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               THE COURT: Thank you.
12
              MR. KESSEL: And another issue -- and, again, I
13
      can't verify this, but apparently, the house -- the
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     Tascon house that's the subject of this criminal action
15
     was also part of Mr. Tascon's estate. So I'm not quite
16
     sure who would inherit what. I'm just trying to contest
17
     and disconnect any connection of my client to the death
18
     of Mr. Tascon.
19
               THE COURT: Understood. Okav. The next
20
     objection I understand is the enhancement for position
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     of trust. And I understood your argument to be that
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     Ms. Herrling didn't actually have any relationship
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     with -- for instance, Mr. Wilding, Mr. Tascon, and so
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     the position of trust enhancement cannot apply.
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              MR. KESSEL: That's right, and I state that in
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my moving papers.
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THE COURT: Okay. And then I did want to give you an opportunity to respond to Note -- Application

Note 3 of 3B1.3, which addresses -- excuse me -- excuse me -- addresses the issue of -- I'll just read it: This adjustment also applies in a case in which the defendant provides sufficient indicia to the victim that the defendant legitimately holds a position of private or public trust when, in fact, the defendant does not.

MR. KESSEL: I -- I heard that Application Note and I've read that Application Note. I don't think there's evidence to support that, Your Honor.

THE COURT: Okay. Because -- if you could tease that out for the Court.

MR. KESSEL: That's indicating -- and I think where I've seen that is, obviously, that adjustment is for a breach of confidentiality or a breach of a relationship that a defendant had with an actual person, Your Honor. And I know of no facts that indicate that Mr. -- Ms. Herrling was in any position to represent anything to Mr. Herrling or Mr. Tascon where they relied on her, where they, obviously, trusted her advice, which, you know, a lot of fiduciary relationships, that type of characteristics are very common and naturally can be breached. I don't see that here.

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THE COURT: Okay. And so your contention would
be even if the -- the actual enhancement doesn't
necessarily -- the actual enhancement doesn't
necessarily require a relationship between the defendant
and the victim, let me just read what the actual
enhancement reads -- give me just one moment. If the
defendant abused a position of public or private trust
or used a special skill in a manner that significantly
facilitated the commission or concealment of the offense
increased by two levels. So as the Court reads it, the
actual enhancement doesn't require a relationship
between the defendant and the victim. Although that
Application Note, I see what you're saying about that
particular Application Note, but your contention would
be, because she never represented herself to be -- to
Mr. Tascon or Mr. Wilding that this could not apply?
        MR. KESSEL: Correct, Your Honor.
         THE COURT: Okay. Understood.
         Okay. Turning to the -- the loss amount, and
whether and how the Lowenstein estate should be
considered.
         MR. KESSEL: Yes. Your Honor, I think I'm
quite aware of loss calculations under the guidelines,
and I'm speaking of actual losses out-of-pocket that can
be directly attributed to the defendant's conduct when
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intended loss. Intended is, obviously, a lot more ambiguous and a lot less to -- to define. In some places, it's very easy. And, in fact, in some places, the law in credit card fraud provides for a dollar amount that the court should use. Here I'm -- I'm indicating with respect to Lowenstein, I don't believe there was any intended loss, because that property -- at least, there is no evidence, was not ever indicating going to the defendant unlike Tascon where there was a sale and proceeds. That property was going through a proper legal channel, albeit there's claims that the Will of Ms. Lowenstein was changed, but as far as that property, it was in the hands of the Court. It was in the hands of a proper fiduciary to the Court that ultimately sold that property for a greater value than what it was worth.

THE COURT: Mr. Kessel, if I could just interrupt you. So I understood your arguments that it was never fraudulently sold. I thought the contention was, because the intention was to fraudulently transfer it to the defendant or other members of the conspiracy, that's why the intended loss is the fair market value when it was sold lawfully. So I wanted to give you a chance to respond to that.

MR. KESSEL: Yes, and I would agree that the

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intended loss could come about from the fact that the
defendant, and I think she's admitted her involvement
with the Lowenstein property, but I guess the dollar
amount that was used doesn't reflect, obviously, a
market value that indicates what would be sold at the
time the defendant was going to obtain the property,
Your Honor. And we know real estate values change at
any given time in the market and that's where it's hard,
and the guidelines speak to this, the Court has to,
obviously, look at objects like real estate that values
go up and down, although real estate has been strong for
many, many years and soft for the last year or so in
somebody's eyes. So my main concern was, one, using the
property at all, and it sounds like the Court is more
inclined to find that it is a consideration for an
intended loss. But, then, again, the Court has to look
at what the value is, because, obviously, the value
leads to the dollar amount, which then has a nexus to
the loss adjustments under the fraud section,
Your Honor.
         THE COURT: Thank you. Why wouldn't I -- I
haven't made any decisions here -- why would I not
consider this property? Because of the fact that it was
never fraudulently sold?
         MR. KESSEL: That was -- that was the Defense's
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1
      argument.
 2
               THE COURT: I see. I see. And then just so I
 3
     understand, the sale, the value argument that -- well,
 4
     we do have its fair market value at the time that it was
 5
      sold, but that's a different time from when the intended
 6
      loss was supposed to happen and so we don't know the
 7
      Delta. It may have been worth less at that time.
 8
               MR. KESSEL: Correct, Your Honor.
 9
               THE COURT: Okay. Thank you so much.
10
               And then turning to -- and you can advise -- I
      think that we now have -- I was going to talk about
11
12
      something that I think we'll need to seal the courtroom
13
      for, and I understand from the clerk that Ms. Williams
14
      is back on.
15
               MR. KESSEL: Okay.
16
               THE COURT: So perhaps this is a good time to
17
     hear from Ms. Williams and then we can close the
18
      courtroom. So I'll have the clerk bring Ms. Williams.
19
               THE COURTROOM DEPUTY: Ms. Williams, if you are
20
     there, could you unmute your video and phone.
21
               MS. WILLIAMS: Hello.
22
               THE COURT: Hello. Can you hear me?
23
               THE COURTROOM DEPUTY: Okay, there she is.
24
               THE COURT: Ms. Williams?
25
               THE WITNESS: [Inaudible.]
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1
               THE COURTROOM DEPUTY: We can't hear you yet.
      It's not clear.
 3
              MS. WILLIAMS: Can you hear me?
 4
               THE COURTROOM DEPUTY: Okay, yes, we can hear
 5
     you now.
               THE COURT: Okay. Okay.
 6
 7
               THE COURTROOM DEPUTY: Should I swear her in,
 8
     Your Honor?
 9
               THE COURT: Let me inquire of the Government.
10
     Should we place her under oath for her statement?
11
              MR. BROWN: No, Your Honor. Because the
12
     victim, who is allocuting --
13
               THE COURT: Okay.
              MR. BROWN: -- cross-examination, there's no
14
15
     perjury, there's no nothing.
16
              THE COURT: Okay. That's fine. Understood.
17
              Okay, Ms. Williams, good afternoon. Can you
18
     hear us?
19
              MS. WILLIAMS: Hello.
20
               THE COURT: Hello. Can you hear me?
21
              MS. WILLIAMS: Okay. I can hear you now.
22
               THE COURT: Okay. Wonderful. Good afternoon.
23
              MS. WILLIAMS: Good afternoon.
24
               THE COURT: Okay. And thank you for joining us
25
     via Zoom. We are here for the sentencing hearing of
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     Caroline Joanne Herrling and the Government counsel,
     Mr. Andrew Brown, has indicated that you wish to be
 3
     heard. So please -- please go ahead. If you can first
 4
      start by stating and spelling your name, that would be
 5
     appreciated.
 6
              MS. WILLIAMS: My name?
 7
              THE COURT: Yes.
              MS. WILLIAMS: It is going in and out. State
 8
 9
      and spell what?
10
               THE COURT: Spell your name.
              MS. WILLIAMS: My name is Miracle Markesha
11
12
     Williams, M-I-R-A-C-L-E. M-A-R-K-E-S-H-A. Williams,
13
     W-I-L-L-I-A-M-S.
14
               THE COURT: Thank you.
15
               Okay. Please go ahead. So, Ms. Williams, I
16
     understood that you wanted to be heard in this
17
      sentencing hearing regarding some information you think
18
     the Court should consider in sentencing Ms. Herrling?
19
              MS. WILLIAMS: Yes, ma'am.
20
               THE COURT: Okay. So please go ahead. We're
21
     all listening.
22
              MS. WILLIAMS: It's going in and out.
23
               THE COURT: Okay. Go ahead. We're listening.
24
              MS. WILLIAMS: Okay. So I just wanted to let
     y'all know like how this whole process like affected
25
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Robert, Emmy, you know, Robert, he wasn't like just the most like -- he was like mentally fragile, but like -- well, I want to start off with like how we loved each other -- and this is Robert, because everybody -- I just want to put a face with him first. This is Robert.

That's him.
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THE COURT: Thank you.

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MS. WILLIAMS: And he was my best friend. Like, this whole stuff, the way I seen it like to take somebody down like mentally and just like really affects somebody and like, you know, him trying to help me and all this going on and I, you know, it made me felt helpless, because I don't know what to do, you know. All I knew is when we came to Texas to hire, you know, hire an attorney and stuff and, you know, he was going through his mental stuff, and we kept on having to like use more money to stay in this case so that we can find out who stole his house. So -- because we were trying to sell it so that we can, you know, start our lives over out here in Texas. And once that happened, it was like the cherry on top of the cupcake for the whole situation like going back and forth. I think we were going back and forth for like a year and a half maybe until I found out it was sold. And it's just like I'm having flashbacks -- I'm sorry.

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THE COURT: I'm sorry. You said you were having flashbacks? We didn't hear you.
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THE WITNESS: He -- it just made him feel -- he just felt helpless in the situation. The situation made him feel helpless. It was mentally like who is -- not knowing like why, but who -- like with your personal information and stuff, do they know where we're at, you know what I mean? Like it was just a whole bunch of like paranoia. It was just a lot for him. It was just so, so much. And then when it came to the day where -when he passed away and everything, I was -- I was in Wichita. I was at a birthday party, and I was -- I had had a weird mood to that whole day. Like it was just --I don't know. Like I was happy to be there, but I really wasn't. Rob stayed at the house with the dogs, because we had had a new litter and everything. He wanted to make sure the pups, you know, got fed and everything -- if they needed anything. My friend, she walked in the room, because I was asleep mostly. And my friend, she had walked in the room, because she had took her nieces downstairs to go get them something to eat and stuff. And when she came back in the room, she was like, Miracle, wake up. I have to tell you something. And you need to wake up right now. I was like, okay, and she was like, she was like Robert, Robert killed

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      himself, and I jumped up and I was like what, I was
 2
      like, no, like, what do you mean? I was like, how? And
 3
      then so my dad was the one who found him. When I had --
 4
      I had came back like they had told me like, Miracle,
 5
      when you come back home, when you get back in town, like
 6
      don't go straight to the house. We don't want you to be
 7
      by yourself. We don't want you to stay --
 8
               THE COURT: Ms. Williams, I'm so sorry to
 9
      interrupt you. We're having a little bit of
10
      difficulty -- we're having a little difficulty
      understanding you when you -- when you're sort of far
11
12
      from the phone. So if you could continue from -- you
13
      indicated that your dad was the person who found
14
      Mr. Tascon, and then we didn't hear anything after that.
15
      Go ahead.
16
               MS. WILLIAMS: Okay. And when I had came back
      in town, you know, I spoke with Mr. Travis, I spoke to
17
18
      my dad, and everything [inaudible] and they told me not
19
      to come back to town. We don't want you to see that.
20
      I'm --
21
               THE COURT:
                          I'm so sorry. Ms. Williams?
22
               MS. WILLIAMS: -- until I get there and --
23
                            (Inaudible.)
24
               THE COURT: Ms. Williams? Ms. Williams?
25
              MS. WILLIAMS: Can you hear me?
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               THE COURT: It is going in and out.
              MS. WILLIAMS: Can you hear me?
 3
               THE COURT: It is going in and out. I'm
 4
     wondering if -- yeah, if you can stay closer to the
 5
     phone. If you could start again. You indicated that --
     not from the beginning, you spoke with your father and
 6
 7
     with Mr. Travis.
 8
              MS. WILLIAMS: Yeah.
               THE COURT: Okay. And then we sort of missed
 9
10
     what you said.
11
              MS. WILLIAMS: You want me to start from there?
12
               THE COURT: Yes, please.
13
              MS. WILLIAMS: Okay. I spoke with my dad and
14
     Mr. Travis, and they told me, you don't go to the house
15
     by myself, to call someone. They didn't want me to be
16
     there by myself. They didn't want me to stay by myself,
     and so I said, okay. So when I had got back in town,
17
18
     you know, I got home. I called my dad.
19
               THE COURT: I'm sorry. Ms. Williams. I'm so
20
     sorry to interrupt you. We are really struggling to
21
     hear you. It keeps breaking up. I don't know if --
22
              MS. WILLIAMS: It's [inaudible] --
23
               THE COURT: I -- I do wonder if -- if we can
24
     try something else besides the Zoom. Perhaps she could
25
     just call into the Court's number. I don't know if you
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1
     have a lot more to say.
               MS. WILLIAMS: [Inaudible.]
 3
               THE COURT: Okay. Yeah, we're not able to hear
 4
      you. So we will let Mr. Brown contact you to let you
 5
      know -- we'll have to hear from you a little bit later
 6
      in the hearing.
 7
              MS. WILLIAMS: Okay.
               THE COURT: Okay. Thank you. And I apologize
 8
 9
      for that whole thing. Okay. So, Mr. Brown --
10
              MS. WILLIAMS: Can you hear me?
               THE COURT: Okay. So we're going to end the
11
12
      Zoom right now. And, then, Mr. Brown, at some point a
13
      little bit later, we'll -- we'll take a recess to figure
14
     out if she can get a better Zoom or if she can call in.
15
     I feel badly for continuing to interrupt Mr. Kessel's
16
     presentation. So we won't do that again. And we'll
17
      just have to hear from her at a later time. I
18
     understand that she wanted to be heard first. But the
19
     technology is not cooperating.
20
               Okay. So, Mr. Kessel, if you wouldn't mind, we
21
     will return to you. We had just addressed the issue of
22
     the Lowenstein estate, and then I indicated that I was
23
     going to go into an issue that I think involves some of
24
     the sealed material. So I'm going to ask the courtroom
25
     clerk at this time to make sure that the Zoom is closed
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      and to seal the courtroom. And I will advise the court
 2
      reporter that this portion of the transcript should be
 3
      sealed for the reasons stated earlier.
 4
                (Sealed proceeding filed separately.)
 5
                (Whereupon, the record is unsealed.)
 6
               MR. BROWN: Yes, Your Honor. So, first,
 7
      there's nothing in 4C1.1 that says, Your Honor, can
 8
      simply ignore a criminal history point. The actual
 9
      quote is, the defendant did not receive any criminal
10
     history points from Chapter four, part A. It doesn't
11
      say that the Court felt were meritorious or relatively
12
     recent or anything. It's --
13
               THE COURT: And let me just interrupt you. I
14
      quess what I thought Mr. Kessel was referring to was --
15
     and you'll have to help me with this: That in -- did
16
     the Court have some discretion with respect to criminal
17
     history --
18
               MR. BROWN: Yes.
19
               THE COURT: -- in determining that some of what
20
     Probation has included under criminal history should not
21
     be included?
22
               MR. BROWN: Not in terms of 4C1.1.
23
               THE COURT: And so that's -- I understand that
24
     that's the distinction that you're making.
25
               MR. BROWN: Yes.
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               THE COURT: But that the idea that Court has
      the discretion for purposes of criminal history --
 3
               MR. BROWN: Correct.
 4
               THE COURT: -- is true? But you're saying that
 5
      that doesn't say anything about the Zero-Point Offender?
               MR. BROWN:
                          Correct.
 6
 7
               THE COURT: Got it.
               MR. BROWN: Okay. You could always give
 8
 9
      somebody a downward departure or downward variance, you
10
     could move them from criminal history Category 1 to 3.
11
     That's all within your discretion, but it doesn't say
12
     here that the criminal history they end up with is in a
13
     particular one or the Court believes that it's correctly
14
      indicative of the defendant's criminality. It just
15
      says, did they receive a criminal history point.
16
               THE COURT: Okay. Thank you.
17
               MR. BROWN:
                          Sure.
18
               THE COURT: I don't think I need anything
19
      further on that. I also don't think I need anything
20
      further on the position of trust. I understand the
21
     Government's arguments and I am inclined to adopt them.
22
      I don't think I need to hear anything further on the
     Lowenstein Estate as I -- I understand that the
23
24
     defendant's arguments about the sale -- that the Court
25
      should not treat the final sale value as the fair market
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      value and because it was not officially fraudulently
      sold, it shouldn't be treated as intended loss. And I'm
 3
      inclined to agree with the Government's position on
 4
      that. I did want to give you the opportunity to respond
 5
     with respect to the ten victims. And you heard Defense
      counsel's responses with respect to the different
 6
 7
      categories that the Government had identified. And so I
 8
      just wanted the record to be clear about what your
 9
      response is, starting, I guess, with victim number 5.
10
               MR. BROWN: Yeah, so, Your Honor, the big
11
     problem with the number of victims as far as the Defense
12
      is concerned, is he has ignored what the guidelines
13
      actually say. It is true that in many cases, the term
14
     victim includes any person who has sustained any part of
15
     the actual loss; however, 2B1.1, Application Note 1,
16
      says --
17
               THE COURT: Give me just a moment, Counsel.
18
               MR. BROWN: And, actually, I misspoke. It's
19
      2B1.1 Application Note 4E as in Edward.
20
                          Sorry. You said 2B?
               The COURT:
21
               MR. BROWN:
                           1.1, Application Note 4, E as in
22
              And I can read it for Your Honor, if that would
23
     be helpful.
               THE COURT: No, it's probably easier for me to
24
25
     read it to myself. Give me just a moment.
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               Okay. So that victim includes any individual
      whose means of identification was used unlawfully or
 3
     without authority?
 4
               MR. BROWN: Right.
 5
               THE COURT: And as you would indicate, without
 6
      regard to whether they experienced any loss?
 7
               MR. BROWN: Exactly, Your Honor.
 8
               THE COURT: Okay. Go ahead. And then with
 9
      respects to 9 through 13?
              MR. BROWN: Yes, Your Honor. So moving back to
10
11
     page eight of the Pacer or page three of the
12
     Government's brief, Document 47, it quotes
13
      United States v. Santarelli in which the defendant had
14
     argued that the only victim was the decedent's estate.
15
     And the Third Circuit affirmed the District Court's
16
     counting as victims all the beneficiaries in the Will,
17
     because they received nothing due to the fraud and they
18
     numbered more than 10. So for the victims numbered 5
19
     through 8, they get counted, because their identities
20
     were misused and, actually, that's also true of victim
21
     17, whose name was put on the forged will. And then
22
     Miracle Williams, Lawrence Eckert, Pamela Sockel,
23
     Susan Smith, and Christine Nealy were all beneficiaries
     of wills, who did not get their inheritance because of
24
25
     the defendant's fraud.
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THE COURT: And what's your response to
Mr. Kessel's argument that they're -- they're not
definitive takers and there are some disputes regarding
those Wills?
         MR. BROWN: That actually troubled me,
Your Honor. What he literally said was, I don't know.
I don't know if they're going to get it. I don't know
if these people are the real takers. But that's not the
question, Your Honor. It's not up to Mr. Kessel's
satisfaction in that he can simply play ostrich and
ignore the evidence. The way that it works is the
presentence report submits information. The parties --
         THE COURT: And I'm just going to stop you
right there just for the sake of efficiency. So my
understanding is that with respect to these individuals,
9 through 13, you're relying on the -- the Meza
declaration and these other exhibits. Mr. Kessel is
indicating that he has knowledge that these
individuals -- that these various Wills are contested.
As I understand it, he has not put evidence in the
record of that. And so I think your conclusion is then
he's -- he's not -- the Government has shown by a
preponderance of the evidence that these are heirs;
correct?
        MR. BROWN: It's not even that he says that
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      it's contested. He just said he didn't know.
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               THE COURT: Well, I think he did say that he is
 3
             But I think that is neither here nor there.
 4
               MR. BROWN: So if he wanted to go out and look
 5
      and see, that's the way the sentencing process is
      supposed to work, and then he can come back with some
 6
 7
      exhibit explaining how they had been disinherited or
 8
     whatever it was, and then Your Honor could resolve it.
 9
     But what cannot happen --
10
               THE COURT: And just, again, for the sake of
     efficiency, I understand your point. Turning to 14
11
12
      through 16, the companies.
13
               MR. BROWN: Yeah, so, Your Honor, charges have
14
     been put onto Mr. Wilding's credit cards. I think
15
     Mr. Kessel talked about how he thought these were
16
      lenders for a home and that they were going to get more
17
     money back than was owed so it would all be fine.
18
     That's not the case. The case is when they looted
19
     Mr. Wilding's home, they got his credit cards and they
20
     kept using them. And they charged up a storm and, of
21
     course, nobody ever paid that. And so Wells Fargo Bank
22
     and Citibank are out-of-pocket from the credit card
23
      fraud that the conspiracy caused and then, similarly,
24
     Fidelity National Title Insurance Company submitted a
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report, which is attached as an exhibit, indicating that

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they are out-of-pocket over \$613,000 for the lawsuit over the Robert Tascon property. So just in the Government's pleading, there are 17 victims, which fully warrants the Plus Two, but even if it didn't, even if everything I said was wrong, it would still apply, because there is also a Plus Two if you cause substantial financial harm to any individual. And, you know, perhaps you'd say, well, you didn't cause harm to Mr. Wilding, if we assume that he was dead before the fraud began. But you can't say that for Robert Tascon. He had one property, and he lost it. His whole house. That was his only asset that he could control. certainly true that he got a monthly stipend so that he was not going to be out on the street or hungry without that house. But that was the only money he had to start over, which is one of the reasons he was so upset when he lost it. So that enhancement applies both, because there are well over 10 victims, and because the defendant caused substantial financial harm to Mr. Tascon. THE COURT: Thank you. Okay. With respect to the leader or organizer, and you can let me know if you think that the courtroom needs to be closed to discuss this -- Mr. Kessel made the argument regarding the idea that Ms. Herrling was actually an equal participant with

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1
     Mr. Kroth.
               MR. KESSEL: It was Mr. Kantor.
 3
               THE COURT: Kantor. Thank you. And in the
 4
     Court's view, that, I guess, is neither here nor there.
 5
      If there were overall five people, which the Government
     has pointed to Wilkins, Salinas, and Shtolzberg, and so
 6
 7
      I wanted -- if there was anything that you wanted to add
 8
      or clarify with respect to the Government's position on
 9
      that, if we put to one side whether she was equal
10
     participants with Kroth and Kantor, if these other
      individuals were led by the organizers, would this
11
12
     enhancement still apply?
13
               MR. BROWN: It absolutely would, Your Honor.
14
     And at ECF Document 47, page 21, it quotes, the
15
     defendant explaining to Mr. Kroth how she doesn't find
16
     him reliable. He doesn't get things done. And so she's
17
     going to use her own team, Hadley, James, Randy, and
18
      Jonathan. Right there, she's listing four persons with,
19
     with herself, that's five participants. That, by
20
      itself, would do it. But, Your Honor, I don't want to
21
      let slide the Defense's comment or claim rather that
22
     Kroth and Kantor are equal to Ms. Herrling. They
23
      certainly are not. When the deal was struck initially,
24
     they did agree on an even split, one-third each. And
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Mr. Kroth found the body. That was his contribution.

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Mr. Kantor had experience with trusts and Wills, and his providing that expertise was his contribution. And the defendant is very intelligence, very organized, very poised, and she was going to be the face of the organization. She was going to deal with the courts and the attorneys. She was going to deal with probate. And she was going to administer the thing. But, Your Honor, it didn't turn out that way. And, it's quite clear even from what the defendants themselves said that she became the leader. As Your Honor noted, one of the main indications that somebody is a leader is that they get a larger share of the proceeds. Well, Mr. Kantor was certainly upset. He got, according to Mr. Versoza's money laundering tracing, \$64,000, and we think, based on some other evidence, it might have been a few thousand dollars more than that. It just wasn't in the bank records. So he was very upset, and that is the context in which he is puffing about his great contributions and why he should be given more money. But even he -- and this is ECF 47 at Pacer page 18, brief page 13, he says, you're saying that we don't deserve our compensation. Not only are you being a bad leader and a bad partner, and then he berates her and tries to get things made. So he acknowledges in his own words that she's the leader, and she gets the money.

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She uses it to buy a house. Mr. Kantor doesn't get anything like that. And, similarly, Mr. Kroth had a similar interaction with her where he felt he was being cut out much like the quote that I previously offered where she explained how he wasn't getting things done and she was going to use her own team. And he said, your role has gotten bigger and bigger and all this and you're taking on more and more of a role and responsibility and stepped up to the plate. And to be honest with you, I am amazed at you, but then he goes on to say, but don't forget, I was the one who found the body so give me my third. But, again, the very people the defendant is claiming were her equals, in their own words say that she is running the show and they are begging her for money and they understand whether they receive it or not, it's in her discretion. So, certainly, Your Honor could impose the plus four for leader and role without determining whether or not she was at the same level or higher than Kroth and Kantor, but she definitely was at a higher role. She was the leader and organizer. And she well-deserves more than plus four, because there were far more than five participants in this conspiracy. THE COURT: Understood. Turning to the obstruction of justice, and I

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want to be careful in case we need to go into the sealed portion, am I correct that one of the basis that Government asserts for an obstruction of justice enhancement is the actual disposal of the body? MR. BROWN: Absolutely. THE COURT: Okay. I don't think, and I understand Mr. Kessel has explained why there's no independent evidence of that. I don't think in the open proceeding, we need to go into that further. I don't see that there is -- that is a consideration of the Court. If the Court finds that it happened by a preponderance of the evidence, and the Court finds that that constitutes obstruction, then this enhancement can apply. And then with respect to the acceptance of responsibility, I heard Mr. Kessel is saying that it's very unusual to deny acceptance of responsibility and,

And then with respect to the acceptance of responsibility, I heard Mr. Kessel is saying that it's very unusual to deny acceptance of responsibility and, typically, it only happens when the defendant has undermined the factual basis and maybe recanted or -- or, you know, at the sentencing, indicated I didn't really do what I said I did. I understand the Government's argument to be here, that's not the situation, but the situation is that Ms. Herrling has engaged in conduct inconsistent with the acceptance of responsibility. Part of that is sealed material.

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But -- but part of that is -- is -- is, for instance,
 1
      the -- the attempts regarding the -- the house and the
 3
      forfeiture.
               MR. BROWN: That's right, Your Honor. And
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     there are other things that are in the open record, too.
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               THE COURT: Okay.
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              MR. BROWN: Not only did she ask her mother to
     take the house explicitly so that it wouldn't be sealed,
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     but she also calls --
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               THE COURT: And where -- I'm sorry. If you can
      just point the Court to -- that is in -- which
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     declaration is that in?
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               So in ECF 47, there's reference made to the
     PSR, paragraph 97. But I wasn't sure --
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               MR. BROWN: I did find it, Your Honor.
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               THE COURT:
                          Oh, great.
              MR. BROWN:
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                          It's ECF Document 62, Pacer page
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     two, brief page two. And the defendant says to her
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     mother: Okay, got a couple of things for you guys, can
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      I -- can I give you guys my house? That's the first
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     one.
22
               Defendant's mother: And then they'll throw us
23
     in jail, too.
               Defendant: No, no, they won't. Nope. Not at
24
25
     all. Can I give you my house so it doesn't get seized?
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And then on top of that, Your Honor, there is another call where she -- and this is from the PSR, where she calls her then boyfriend, a Samuel Shtolzberg, and asks him to falsely tell the Government that the identity -- the counterfeit identity document of Robert Tascon came from Kroth when it did not. So in open documents that are not sealed, she has twice, from prison, tried to obstruct justice just in those two. And that's not -- and, I mean, there are many, many, many more examples that we're not going to discuss with the courtroom open. But I really -- well, I've said enough.

THE COURT: Yeah, okay. Thank you. Okay.

That's all I had in terms of my questions. I don't know if you needed to address anything further with respect to the death of Mr. Tascon with the evidence that's in the record and the statement of Ms. Williams. I -- I do think that there's enough to find that the -- that the death was a suicide and that it was caused at least in part by the loss of this home. I don't think anyone disputes that Mr. Tascon, as his wife indicated, was mentally fragile, but I don't understand that to be -- the fact that he was mentally fragile doesn't mean that this didn't cause the suicide.

Okay. So that's all I have in terms of my

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questions. Anything else that you want to share with the Court and then at that point, we'll take our break. We'll see if the, if the clerk can get the -- Ms. Williams back and I can briefly hear from her as well if she had anything further.
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MR. BROWN: Thank you, Your Honor.

I wanted to address the defendant's lack of criminal history, which I see as could be seen as the most mitigating factor, but I don't think it is in this The Defense argues that she should be shown leniency, because she has almost no criminal history and has not yet had drug treatment. And while she doesn't have many convictions, only the one, that's not the same as not having been involved in crime in the past. has acknowledged that she has been a daily methamphetamine user for the last 18 years, smoking it, eight to nine times per day. And she wants this Court to believe that during those 18 years, she was a high performing and otherwise honest entrepreneur, who ran a business from her home that provided litigation consulting, notwithstanding that she only has a high school degree, and by her own admission, has only had about 77 days of sobriety as an adult.

She told Probation that she earned \$150,000 per year legitimately as a litigation consultant from 2014

to 2022, the nine years before her arrest.

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In paragraph 149 of the PSR, they report that Herrling says, she was the owner of her own litigation consulting firm, Nexus Consulting, she reported earning \$150,000 a year. And then they checked the California Secretary of State website and saw that her business was inactive, and that another business with the same name was, again, opened, but this owner was Caroline Phoenix, which is her AKA and the alias she used when committing the Robert Tascon fraud. Now, if she had really been a high performing business person during that period, it would definitely be mitigating, because it would tend to show that she could return to working honestly and paying taxes like the rest of us. But the evidence is to the contrary, you know. Putting aside that her business is inactive, we subpoenaed her tax records from 2015 through 2022, and this is at the complaint affidavit, at paragraph 77. She did not file tax returns at all from 2016 to 2022, despite her claim that she earned \$155,000 per year then. She did file a tax return for 2015, but it showed that she had a business loss, not the \$150,000 that she claims she made. And, of course, we may infer that her Nexus Consulting was fraudulent by the fact that she put it

Phoenix received a cease and desist letter from the California State Bar for the unauthorized practice of law. That's at the complaint affidavit, paragraph 76. So how has she been paying for her living expenses and her drug addiction this whole time? She does not have any verifiable employment. The only evidence of income in the record is from her scams, Nexus Consulting, scammed consumers out of money while the defendant acted as an attorney, which she clearly was not. And, of course, the evidence from this case shows that she has made a great deal of money from identity theft. So while she has almost no convictions, she has supported herself and her addiction for 26 years and there is no evidence that she had legitimate income during that time.

One of the most aggravating parts about her history is how incorrigible she is. A normal person in her situation would be scared from all the police contact she had and would drop crime and go straight. The defendant has a long record of every time she is caught or close to being caught, she responds with lies, obstruction of justice, and more fraud. Even after the state bar issued a cease and desist letter against her for the unauthorized practice of law, she continued to practice law. And that's at complaint affidavit,

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paragraph 64, 76, and 106. And when she was being investigated by LAPD homicide, regarding the disappearance of Charles Wilding, she stole and sold Robert Tascon's property. I mean, how brazen is that? And this, of course, led to his demise. And even while she was being sued over the fraudulent sale of Robert Tascon's property, she still hunted for more victims -and that's at complaint affidavit, paragraph 101, where she has the heirs index on her computer and has searches for millionaire in obituary and lists promising victims. Her extraordinary brazen and reckless crimes while under investigation and cease and desist warnings, shows she is incapable of conforming her actions to the law. thought at first, well, this must be the methamphetamine. She feels invincible. But I was wrong. Even after she was arrested and jailed and no longer had access to methamphetamine, and she was being advised by an attorney, and was pending sentencing before this Court, she still turned to more scams. tried to put her house in her parents' names so it could not be seized, and she tried to get her boyfriend to lie to the investigators about a source of the Robert Tascon ID pinning it falsely on Jason Kroth. She does not stop. Her answer to everything is more fraud and more lies.

The defendant has also written in her papers that she should get leniency, because she has -- she has a drug problem, which the Government completely agrees with. And never had the benefit of treatment.

While she had 26 years to get treatment,
Narcotics Anonymous has 500 groups in
Southern California that host over a thousand meetings
per month. No one prevented her from joining them. She
chose not to even though the drugs were destroying her
health as the Court knows from the illnesses she now
reports, which are associated with methamphetamine
abuse.

Well, when the agents executed a search warrant at her residence, they interviewed her about the drugs and she said that she quote, "did not need drug rehabilitation." That was complaint affidavit at 91.

And the irony, Your Honor, is this defendant who is asking for leniency, because she had a drug problem and needs drug treatment, runs a sober living facility where she keeps a homemade silencer, assault rifles, ghost guns, meth, heroin, and everything else.

One other point that I did not make in my paper, Your Honor, is about the advantages this defendant has had. I'm sure Your Honor has seen many defendants who come from broken homes and poverty and

they reasonably argue that they never really had a chance, because they grew up in high-crimed areas where they were pushed into criminality. But the defendant, by her own admission, says that she had the best childhood that anyone could ask for. She was the last of her parents' children. Her siblings went off to college when she was in kindergarten, her family was financially secure. She was the apple of her parents' eyes and got love and support and stability from them. She excelled at school. She is really smart and organized. But for whatever reason, she's chosen to use that to pursue crimes like a professional.

You know, it gets back again to how Mr. Kroth, who she was pushing out, because she found him unreliable, talked about how amazed he was at her abilities and how she was performing so highly. And I think he's right. She's amazing at professionalizing stealing estates, tracking unkept houses, using subordinates to search for potential victims who are unlikely to be able to defend their property, and she has the intelligence and leadership to run a crew. And the poise to work with attorneys and courts to take over estates.

Your Honor, I'm going to skip over Robert

Tascon based on your comments, and I'll just briefly

touch on Mr. Wilding.

Obviously, Your Honor has already indicated that she obstructed justice by disposing of the body. First trying to dissolve it in lye, and then hacking it up and dumping it in the ocean. But she also directed others to rip out the floor boards and -- of the house so that there would be no evidence of where he died. And this has prevented us from determining his manner of death. But what does it say about her character that she attempted to dissolve him in lye, and then desecrated his body with an axe? Hardened criminals in the organization flinched in taking part of that.

Mr. Kroth, who has 15 felony convictions, wouldn't do it. And then when she goes to the Bay area to dump it in the ocean, she goes up on a muscle car and turns it into a mini vacation, taking selfies on the boat with her smiling and then flying back on a private jet that she could afford with the fraud proceeds.

I think that really says it all about her character.

Thank you, Your Honor.

THE COURT: Thank you.

And just so that the record is clear, besides

Ms. Williams, there were no other victims that wanted to
be heard; correct?

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                          That's right, Your Honor.
               MR. BROWN:
               THE COURT: Okay. And I don't know that I need
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      to hear from Ms. Williams before I rule on the contested
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      issues concerning the guidelines range. So I will go
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      ahead and do that unless Government has an objection.
     And then while I take the recess, we can see if -- if we
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 7
      can still get her back.
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               MR. BROWN: No objection, Your Honor.
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               THE COURT:
                          Okay. Thank you.
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               Okay. So as I listed in the beginning, there
     were a number of disputes raised concerning the
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     guidelines range calculation, and just so that the
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      record is clear, I do want to advise the parties of the
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     Court's rulings on these -- on these matters. And I do
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      find that the standard of proof under these
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     circumstances is clear and convincing -- excuse me,
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     preponderance of the evidence for the reasons I stated
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     at the outset, and I find that the evidence that the
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     Government has pointed to, namely, the complaint
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     affidavit, the Versoza declaration, the statements of
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     Ms. Herrling herself, and the recording that
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     Ms. Herrling attached to her documents as well as the
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     other hearsay statements are admissible, because they
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     all have the indicia of reliability.
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               With respect to the Zero-Point Offender, I find
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Ms. Herrling does not -- is not a Zero-Point Offender and does not qualify. She does have a criminal history point even if the Court could put aside her criminal history point, the Court is not inclined to and declines to do so.

With respect to the position of the trust, the Court finds that reading the guideline together with the Application Note, what Ms. Herrling did, which is undisputed, which is to present herself as an attorney, as somebody with the power of an attorney, and other things of that nature, even if she didn't present herself to, for instance, Tascon and Wilding, does fit within the definition for the position of trust enhancement. So I find that that does apply.

With respect to the Lowenstein Estate, for the reasons I alluded to earlier, it was her intention to unlawfully transfer this, so the estate counts, and the Court finds that the fair market value at the time of the sale, given the period of time between when the intended transfer happened and when the sale was, that's a fair measure of the market value. It's true that real estate does fluctuate, but the Court doesn't see anything in the record to suggest that it fluctuated so much that the fair market value at sale is not an appropriate measure of the intended loss, which is --

the guidelines indicate that much deference is given to the sentencing judge on that determination.

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With respect to the number of victims: Court has considered the arguments of counsel with respect to the number of victims, and for the reasons stated -- primarily the reasons stated by Mr. Brown in his rebuttal today, the Court finds that there is support for over ten victims. The companies are indeed victims for the reasons Mr. Brown stated. There is evidence in the record to support victims 9 through 13. And there isn't any contradictory evidence besides the arguments of counsel and no loss is needed for the 5 through 8 and 17, because their identities were used. The Court also does find under the circumstances that substantial financial harm was caused to Mr. Tascon so that's an independent reason for that particular enhancement.

With respect to the leader/organizer, the Court finds that there were at least five participants and that Ms. Herrling was an organizer or leader. The Court is inclined to find that she was the organizer and leader, but even if the Court was not, even if she was equal to Kantor and Kroth, that the enhancement, which would still apply, and the Court relies heavily on the exhibit sheet put into the record as well as other

statements that were not in the nature of co-conspirator statements that the Court would normally be skeptical of, because they were in like conversations amongst the co-conspirators.

With respect to the obstruction of justice, the Government has pointed to a number of possibilities with respect to obstruction of justice. The Court does find the following to be supported by the evidence in the record and to be -- to constitute obstruction of justice, the -- the disposal of the body, the asking her parents to take her home so that it would not be seized, and then trying to get her boyfriend to lie about where the identity information for Mr. Wilding came from.

And then, finally, with respect to acceptance of responsibility, the Court can consider conduct that is inconsistent with the acceptance of responsibility.

And in particular, the Court can consider that — the Application Note Four indicates that the conduct resulting in the obstruction enhancement ordinarily indicates that the defendant has not accepted responsibility, and so the Court finds that that — that would be appropriate here and, in addition to that, so in addition to the obstruction, the other conduct that the Court noted, which is inconsistent with the acceptance of responsibility, such as trying to get

another witness to lie and trying to avoid the forfeiture that was agreed to in the plea agreement. I've already indicated that I do believe that the evidence in the record demonstrates to this Court by a preponderance of the evidence that the death of Mr. Tascon did result in part from the conduct of Mr. Herrling and her co-conspirators, in that it was a suicide, and I think I've already addressed the evidence that's in the record on that. So I think I've addressed all of the -- do you need a moment?

So for that reason, I do find the report to be

So for that reason, I do find the report to be accurate and correct. I'll adopt the report and its calculation of the Advisory Sentencing Guidelines. I will just note to the extent that my comments today depart from the presentence report. It's my comments today that would govern. The Advisory Guidelines are the starting point and the initial bench mark in the Court's analysis. I'm taking into account the November 1st, 2023 edition of the guidelines. I'm consulting and taking that into account. The total offense level is therefore 39. The criminal history category is one and the guidelines range for custody is 240 months for the reasons stated by Probation in the --- I think it was in the presentence report or perhaps in their recommendation. The actual guidelines range would

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be 262 to 327, but this crime has a statutory maximum of 240. And so for that reason, that's what counts as the guidelines range.

The guideline range for supervised release is one to three years. The fine guidelines range is 50,000 to 250,000, and the special assessment to the crime victim's fund is \$100.

I'm making an individualized determination based upon the facts. I'm also considering the factors described in 18 U.S.C. Section 3553, Subdivision A, especially, but not exclusively, the nature and circumstances of the offense and history and characteristics of the defendant, the need for the sentence to reflect the seriousness of the offense, to promote respect for the law, and provide just punishment, for an adequate deterrence for criminal conduct, protect the public from further crimes of the defendant, and provide the defendant with needed educational or vocational training, medical care, or other correctional treatment in the most effective manner, the kinds of sentences available, the kinds of sentence and sentencing range established for the applicable category of offense committed by the applicable category of defendant as set forth in the guidelines subject to amendments, any pertinent policy

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      statements issued by the sentencing commission, subject
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      to amendments, the need to avoid unwarranted sentence
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      disparities amongst defendants with similar records who
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      have been convicted of similar offenses, and the need to
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      provide restitution to victims of the offense.
               Do the parties wish to be heard further with
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      respect to the sentence they believe is appropriate?
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      Mr. Kessel?
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               MR. KESSEL: No, Your Honor.
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               THE COURT: Mr. Brown.
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               MR. BROWN: No, Your Honor.
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               THE COURT: Mr. Kessel, does the defendant
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      waive reading of General Order 20-04?
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               MR. KESSEL: Yes, Your Honor.
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               THE COURT: Okay. We will take a
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      15-mintue recess at this time. I will ask the clerk if
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      she is able to work with Mr. Brown to get Ms. Williams
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      back and when I return, I will either announce the
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      sentence or hear from Ms. Williams first. Court's in
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      recess.
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                              (Recess.)
22
               THE COURT: Can I see the parties at sidebar on
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      the record, and the sidebar will be sealed.
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                         (Sealed Sidebar.)
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                (Whereupon, the record is unsealed.)
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THE COURT: And I understand we have
Ms. Williams on the phone. Ms. Williams, can you hear
us?
         MS. WILLIAMS: Yes, I can hear you.
         THE COURT: Okay. Thank you. And we can hear
you. And thank you for being willing to come back and
it looks like we're now able to hear you clearly. I
understand from my colleague, the courtroom deputy
clerk, that you first wanted your father to be heard.
         THE WITNESS: Yes, ma'am. He is also on
three-way. I am sorry he has to connect that way.
We're on a three-way as well. My father is Arthur
Maurice Williams, who was actually the one who found
Robert when he passed away.
         THE COURT: Okay. And, Ms. Williams, and thank
you, Mr. Williams, for being willing to participate.
a sentencing hearing, there are certain rules concerning
who can speak at a sentencing hearing. And I'm limited
by those rules. So I do acknowledge how devastating it
must have been for Mr. Williams to discover his
son-in-law in this manner and so I don't want to take
away from that, but I have to let you know that,
unfortunately, I cannot hear from Mr. Williams in this
hearing, because of the rules that apply. I hope you
understand that.
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THE WITNESS: Okay, yes, ma'am. Well, I'll
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      only have my dad speak through me.
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               THE COURT: Okay. And so I just want to hear
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      from you as a victim of the crimes that we're here for
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      sentencing on, and we did hear much of what you said
     earlier and you explained how much stress was caused and
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 7
      you explained the nature of your relationship with
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     Mr. Tascon, and the plans that the two of you had for
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      starting afresh, and you explained to us how he was
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     mentally fragile and -- and how much pain he went
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     through once he realized that he had lost his -- his
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     house and -- and you also explained to us quite
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      compellingly how he felt in terms of the paranoia and
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     the other stresses not knowing who had taken his
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      identity and what they were doing with it.
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               THE WITNESS: Yes, ma'am.
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               THE COURT: And I think where we started to
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     break up --
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               MS. WILLIAMS: Continuing off from that, I left
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     off -- I want to continue off from that by saying that
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      [inaudible] and also who was doing this? You know what
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      I mean, because we didn't know who -- we knew that, you
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      know, I'm not going to -- okay, vender off from the
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     whole situation, but we thank you all for actually
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      finding who was responsible, for being behind -- being
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      the number one person, okay. And I want this to be
     understood that Robert, his dad was the one who designed
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      in part that, okay. And his mother was a renowned
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     heart -- was a renowned artist out of Canada. He was an
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     only child, no kids or anything. You know, his dad, you
     know -- his dad wanted him to be like a lawyer or a
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 7
     doctor or something. [Inaudible] his plans designed and
      stuff like that. [Inaudible] -- and, you know, what I
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 9
     mean -- so it was always like, you know, he told me his
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     whole life, it was a back and forth [inaudible] --
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               THE COURT: I'm sorry. Ms. Williams.
     Ms. Williams. Ms. Williams. Ms. Williams.
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     Ms. Williams, can you hear us?
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               THE COURT DEPUTY: Ms. Williams. Ms. Williams.
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     Ms. Williams. Hello. Can you hear the Court? The
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     Court is trying to speak to you. Okay. Stop speaking
17
      for a minute, please.
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               THE COURT: Can you hear us?
              THE WITNESS: Yeah.
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               THE COURT: Okay. We weren't able to hear what
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     you were saying and then I think you couldn't hear me
22
     when I was tying to interrupt. You explained to his
23
     parents, where you explained that he liked plans and
24
     designs and then please proceed.
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               THE WITNESS: What was the last part?
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               THE COURT: Designs.
               THE WITNESS: Yes, Robert's passing.
 3
               THE COURT: And you said -- you said his
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     parents wanted him to be a doctor or a lawyer and he
 5
      liked plans and designs, I thought you said.
 6
               THE WITNESS: Yeah, like landscaping -- like
 7
      landscaping and designs.
 8
               THE COURT: Yes.
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               MS. WILLIAMS: So his father and [inaudible] --
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               THE COURT: I'm sorry. You said the father --
11
     you said "father."
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               MS. WILLIAMS: Yes, when Caroline stole his
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      estate and everything -- [inaudible.]
14
               THE COURT: Yes.
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               MS. WILLIAMS: -- we were -- we had to use
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     our -- he had to use those rentals [inaudible] that was
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     also used to pay our monthly expenses and handle our
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     business, but because she stole the house, we had to
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     remain in the quarter -- the Court processed thousands
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     and thousands of dollars. It was taken away from our
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     living expenses and everything, making the situation
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     more stressful, and not knowing who this was who was
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     after us, you know. And it was just a stressful matter
     as a whole. And then once we found out that the house
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     was actually -- we were actually in the process of
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      selling the house. And then once we found out --
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      [inaudible] because they said was the
     house [inaudible -- we said no, we both [inaudible] --
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               THE COURT: I'm so sorry. Ms. Williams,
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     Ms. Williams, Ms. Williams.
               THE WITNESS: [Inaudible] whoever she was
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 7
     involved with who owned [inaudible] -- she did whatever
     she can do, but me and Robert had big plans. My dad, he
 8
 9
     had retired and everything. Me and my Robert, once we
10
     married and came to Texas, we told my dad, you can go
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     had ahead and retire. We built a family business
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      [inaudible] --
13
               THE COURT: I'm going to ask her you to
14
     interrupt her.
15
              MS. WILLIAMS: My daddy [inaudible] --
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               THE DEPUTY CLERK: Ms. Williams, Ms. Williams,
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     hello, hello, hello, hello. Yes, stop for a
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     minute. The judge is trying to speak. You have to
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     listen, as well as when you speak. You have to listen,
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     okay. And you have to slow down. Okay. Hold on just
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     speak for a minute.
22
               THE COURT: Okay. So, Ms. Williams,
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     unfortunately, I -- there -- we are -- this is the
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     difficulty with having somebody appear remotely. It's
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     so -- our technology does not really allow us to hear
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you clearly. And then you're not able to hear me when I'm interrupting you. And I really don't want us to go too long without being able to record what you're saying. And the court reporter and I are really struggling to hear what you're saying. But if I may, this is what I'm understanding from what you're saying. You have explained to us the importance of Robert as a person, to you, and to his family. And you have explained how this theft of his property caused him so much stress and caused you so much stress and pain. And I think you've explained that very, very eloquently what the effects of Ms. Herrling's crime was on you and was on Robert. And I really appreciate you taking the time and being patient with us and our technology in explaining all of that. And I also understand from you that you have explained that this caused so much distress that it caused Robert to take his own life, which, obviously, has caused you untold pain. Is that an accurate summary? MS. WILLIAMS: I also attempted to commit suicide, as well after Robert committed suicide. So now I don't -- I'm not even off of my medications, because I was on pills. And I was on nightly medications and sleep medications. When I committed -- when I attempted to commit suicide after my husband did so I could

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      communicate with him and understand him and just
      understand what kind of pain he was in and know that no
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      matter what, I had your back, and I'm sorry that we
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      couldn't find these people within your lifetime. When I
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      committed -- when I attempted, I'm not -- I'm not able
      to be on my medications now, because now I have bad
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 7
      anxiety and stuff, because now I'm not even comfortable
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      with having medications around me for my own purposes.
 9
      So this is still affecting me until this day.
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               THE COURT: Thank you. Thank you.
               I really want to thank you for the time that
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      you spent with us. And I cannot imagine how difficult
13
      it is for you to talk about these things. And the Court
14
      greatly appreciates it. And I am very --
15
               MS. WILLIAMS: Thank you. And I just want you
16
      all to know that this lady had kind of talent to her.
17
      You know what I mean? Like [inaudible] --
18
               THE COURT: I didn't hear what you said. Just
19
      a moment. I didn't hear what you said.
20
               THE COURTROOM DEPUTY: Hello, hello, hello,
21
      hello.
             The Court didn't hear what you said. You keep
22
      rambling. And we can't -- can you hear me? Okay.
23
      Court didn't understand what you were saying about the
24
      defendant. So wait, wait, wait. No, no, no, stop. I
```

need to put you back on speaker, but you have to speak

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slowly for the court reporter, Okay?
 1
               Okay. Hold on.
 3
               THE COURT: Okay. So the last thing you said
 4
      about Ms. Herrling that we need to understand?
 5
               MS. WILLIAMS: Yes, ma'am. I would like the
     Court to understand that I honestly feel in reading
 6
 7
     everything and seeing how she's (inaudible) and
 8
     processing everything, this could have been literally
 9
      somebody. You know, me and my husband, you know, we
10
     were financially -- it goes a long way. You know what
      I'm saying, knowing how to protect yourself from any
11
12
     kinds of crimes. (Inaudible) -- it is a long way.
13
               THE COURT: Can I ask you to interrupt her.
14
               THE COURTROOM DEPUTY: Hello, hello, hello,
15
     Ms. Williams, hold on. Hold on.
16
               THE COURT: Thank you.
17
               THE COURTROOM DEPUTY: Hello. Ms. Williams,
18
     hold on. Hold on.
19
               THE COURT: Okay. Thank you so much,
20
     Ms. Williams. We are going to have to continue with the
21
     hearing. But I do really thank you for your time and
22
     while you were not here, Mr. Brown also did I thought
23
     quite a compelling job of explaining the effects.
24
               MS. WILLIAMS: Can I finish the last part of my
25
      sentence that I just wanted the Court to know that this
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1
      lady is a big manipulator and a con artist. And she's
 2
     gotten away with whatever she can get away with using
 3
      the dead, and misusing their wishes and taking advantage
 4
     of people, and that they need to know that she --
 5
     obviously, she knows how to use her words and
     everything, and knows how to manipulate people around
 6
 7
      the authority; that she, obviously, was branded or
      something. And those people hold her accountable, and
 8
 9
      don't let this happen to anybody else. Thank you.
10
               THE COURT: Thank you.
              MS. WILLIAMS: Really really from my family and
11
12
     Robert. I can provide for my baby brothers, myself, my
13
      family. Don't let her get away with it.
14
              THE COURT: Thank you. Thank you,
15
     Ms. Williams.
16
               THE COURTROOM DEPUTY: Okay. Thank you. We're
17
     going to hang up now. Okay. Bye-bye.
18
               THE COURT: Okay. The -- the -- do the parties
19
     need to be heard further?
20
              MR. KESSEL: No, Your Honor.
21
               THE COURT: No. Okay. Thank you.
                                                   The factors
22
      that the Court -- the Court finds most compelling in
23
     this case are the nature and circumstances of the
24
     offense and the history and characteristics of the
25
     defendant. We need for the sentence to reflect the
```

seriousness of the offense to promote respect for the law and provide just punishment, afford adequate deterrence for criminal conduct, and protect the public from further crimes of the defendant.

Reprehensible and immoral. These are the words that Ms. Herrling, that you used to describe your conduct. The Court actually finds it difficult to find words appropriate to describe the seriousness of this offense.

The Court finds particularly serious the persistence with which Ms. Herrling engaged in these offenses and the planning and sophistication that it took. But I think what you may have been referring to, Ms. Herrling, and what this Court finds particularly reprehensible was how Mr. Wilding was treated. Charles Wilding was a man. He was a human being. He may not have had much in the way of family and friends, but his life had meaning and purpose, the way all of our lives do. But Ms. Herrling apparently did not see that. She used him as a cash register and when she was done with him, hacked him to pieces with as little fan fair as one would do to an old cash register that no longer worked.

Similarly, the tragic death of Mr. Tascon and the emotional anguish that he and his wife suffered is a reminder that even a fraud crime, sometimes you've

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euphemistically referred to as a white collar crime, can
have devastating affects on its victims, even if no
enhancement applies for causing a death. Pain that Mr.
Tascon's widow faces due to the loss of her husband and
the extreme stress caused by Ms. Herrling's crime, which
precipitated his death, and the fact that the last
period of time she had with him was overshadowed by the
stress that had been caused by this crime, all of that
are factors that this Court considers in determining the
seriousness of this offense.
         On the other hand, the Court does consider as
mitigation the sealed material that I discussed with
counsel at sidebar as well as the health concerns and
Ms. Herrling's experiences while in custody.
         Do the parties have any legal objections to the
Court imposing sentence?
         MR. BROWN: No, Your Honor.
         MR. KESSEL: No, Your Honor.
         THE COURT: Does either counsel know of any
reason why sentence should not now be imposed?
         MR. KESSEL: No, Your Honor.
         MR. BROWN: No, Your Honor.
         THE COURT: I will now state the sentence:
find that the following sentence is reasonable, and is
sufficient, does no greater than necessary to comply
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with the purposes stated in Title 18 of the United States Code, Section 3553, Subdivision A.
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It is ordered that the defendant shall pay to the United States a special assessment of a hundred dollars, which is due immediately. Any unpaid balance shall be due during the period of imprisonment at the rate of not less than \$25 per quarter and pursuant to the Bureau of Prisons Inmate Financial Responsibility Program.

It is ordered that the defendant shall pay restitution in the amount of \$3,887,051, pursuant to Title 18 of the United States Code, Section 3663(A).

The amount of restitution shall be paid as follows:

Charles and June Wilding: \$447,051; Jackie Lowenstein:

\$1,000,920; Robert Tascon: \$1,500,000.

Restitution shall be due during the period of imprisonment at the rate of not less than \$25 per quarter pursuant to the Bureau of Prisons Inmate Financial Responsibility Program.

If any amount of the restitution remains unpaid after release from custody, nominal monthly payments of at least \$100 shall be made during the period of supervised release.

These payments shall begin 90 days after the commencement of supervision.

Nominal restitution payments are ordered as the Court finds that the defendant's economic circumstances do not allow for either immediate or future payment of the amount ordered.

If the defendant makes a partial payment, each payee shall receive approximately proportional payment unless another priority order or percentage payment is specified in the judgment.

Pursuant to Title 18 of the United States Code, Section 3612, Subdivision F.3.A., interest on the restitution ordered is waived, because the defendant does not have the ability to pay interest.

Payments may be subject to penalties for default and delinquency pursuant to Title 18 of the United States Code, Section 3612, Subdivision G. The defendant shall comply with Second Amended General Order Number 20-04. Pursuant to Guideline 5E1.2, Subdivision A, all fines are waived as the Court finds that the defendant has established that she is unable to pay and is not likely to become able to pay any fine. The Court has found that the property identified -- I understand that the Government has withdrawn the forfeiture.

MR. BROWN: That's right, Your Honor. There is no equity left in it.

THE COURT: Thank you. Pursuant to the

Sentencing Reform Act of 1984, it is the judgment of the Court that the defendant, Caroline Joanne Herrling, is hereby committed on Count 1 of the information to the custody of the Bureau of Prisons for a term of 240 months.

The Court recommends that the defendant be considered for participation in the Bureau of Prisons Residential Drug Abuse Program. The Court recommends that the Bureau of Prisons conduct a mental health evaluation of the defendant and provide all necessary treatment.

Upon release from imprisonment, the defendant shall be placed on supervised release for a term of three years under the following terms and conditions:

One, the defendant shall comply with the rules and regulations of the United States Probation and Pretrial Services Office and Second Amended General Order 20-04, including the conditions of probation and supervised release set forth in Section 3 of General -- Second General -- excuse me, Section 3 of Second Amended General Order 20-04.

During the period of community supervision, the defendant shall pay the special assessment and restitution in accordance with this judgment's orders pertaining to such payment.

The defendant shall cooperate in the collection of a DNA sample from the defendant. The defendant shall apply all monies received from income tax refunds, lottery winnings, inheritance, judgments, and any other financial gains to the Court-ordered financial obligation.

The defendant shall refrain from any unlawful use of a controlled substance.

The defendant shall submit to one drug test within 15 days of release from custody and at least two periodic drug tests thereafter, not to exceed eight tests per month as directed by the probation officer.

The defendant shall participate in an out-patient substance abuse and treatment and counseling program. That includes urinalysis, breath or sweat patch testing as directed by the probation officer. The defendant shall abstain from using alcohol and illicit drugs and from abusing prescription medications during the period of supervision.

During the course of supervision, the probation officer, with the agreement of the defendant and Defense counsel, may place the defendant in a residential drug treatment program approved by the probation, U.S.

Probation and Pretrial Services Office for treatment of narcotic addiction or drug dependency, which may include

counseling and testing to determine if the defendant has reverted to the use of drugs. The defendant shall reside in the treatment program until discharged by the program director and probation officer.

As directed by the probation officer, the defendant shall pay all or part of the cost of the Court-ordered treatment to the aftercare contractors during the period of community supervision.

The defendant shall provide payment and proof of payment as directed by the probation officer. If the defendant has no ability to pay, no payment shall be required.

Sorry, Counsel, did you need a moment with your client?

MR. KESSEL: No, I'm fine. Thank you.

THE COURT: Okay. When not employed or excused by the probation officer for schooling, training, or other acceptable reasons, the defendant shall perform 20 hours of community service per week as directed by the Probation and Pretrial Services Office.

The defendant shall not be self-employed nor be employed in a position that does not provide regular pay stubs with the appropriate deductions for taxes unless approved by the probation officer.

The defendant shall not obtain or possess any

driver's license, social security number, birth certificate, passport, or any other form of identification in any name other than the defendant's true, legal name nor shall the defendant use any name other than the defendant's true, legal name without the prior written approval of the probation officer.

The defendant shall not be employed in any position that requires licensing or certification by any local, state, or federal agency without the prior written approval of the probation officer.

Defendant shall submit defendant's person, and any property, residence, vehicle, papers, computer, other electronic communication or data storage devices or media or effects to search and seizure at any time of the day or night by any law enforcement officer or probation officer with or without a warrant and with or without cause.

If stopped or questioned by a law enforcement officer for any reason, defendant shall notify that officer that defendant is on federal supervised release and subject to search with or without cause.

The defendant shall participate in mental health treatment, which may include evaluation and counseling until discharged from the program by the treatment provider with the approval of the probation

officer.

The Court authorizes the Probation and Pretrial Services Office to disclose the presentence report to the substance abuse treatment provider to facilitate the defendant's treatment for narcotic addiction or drug dependency.

Further redisclosure of the presentence report by the treatment provider is prohibited without the consent of the sentencing judge.

The Court authorizes the probation officer to disclose the presentence report and any previous mental health evaluations or reports to the treatment provider. The treatment provider may provide information, excluding the presentence report, to state or local social service agencies such as the state of California, Department of Social Service for the purpose of the client's rehabilitation.

Counsel, as you heard, the Court has already recommended that Ms. Herrling be placed in the residential treatment program. Did you have a recommendation that you wanted the Court to provide concerning the location of Ms. Herrling's incarceration?

MR. KESSEL: Just that it's somewhere in Southern California, Your Honor.

THE COURT: I'm sorry. In Southern California,

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1
      okay. And I assume that's because that's closest to her
     means of support?
 3
               Okay. The defendant is remanded to the custody
 4
     of the United States Marshal. I trust there are no
 5
      remaining counts to be dismissed.
 6
               MR. BROWN: No, Your Honor. The Government
 7
     moves to dismiss the remaining counts of the indictment.
 8
               THE COURT:
                          Thank you.
 9
               MR. BROWN: The information, Your Honor.
               THE COURT: Thank you. The remaining counts
10
11
      are dismissed. Does either counsel have anything
12
      further before I address the issue of appeals or provide
13
     my final comments to Ms. Herrling?
14
               MR. KESSEL: No, Your Honor.
15
              MR. BROWN: No, Your Honor.
16
               THE COURT: The Statement of Reason shall be
17
      included in the Commitment Order and Judgment and shall
18
     be provided to the probation officer. The probation
19
     office, the United States Sentencing Commission, and the
20
     Bureau of Prisons. A complete copy of the presentence
21
     report shall be provided to the Bureau of Prisons and
22
     the sentencing commission. Any other copies of the
23
     report and related materials shall remain confidential.
24
     If an appeal is taken, counsel on appeal shall have
25
     access to the report.
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Ms. Herrling, you do have a right to appeal your conviction, if you believe that your quilty plea was somehow unlawful or involuntary, or if there was some other fundamental defect in the proceedings that was not waived by your quilty plea. You also have a right to appeal your sentence under some circumstances, particularly if you think your sentence is contrary to law. However, a defendant may waive those rights as part of a plea agreement and you have entered into a plea agreement that waives some or all of your right to appeal your conviction and your sentence. Such waivers are generally enforceable. And the plea agreement controls your right to appeal. If you believe the waiver is unenforceable, you can present that theory to the Court of Appeals. If you retained any right to appeal with few exceptions, a Notice of Appeal must be filed within 14 days of judgment being entered. Do you understand that? THE DEFENDANT: Yes. THE COURT: And I'll just need you to speak into the microphone. THE DEFENDANT: Yes, I do. THE COURT: Okay. Thank you. If you are unable to provide -- to afford a transcript of the

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record in this case, one will be provided at the Government expense. If you are unable to pay the cost of an appeal or the filing fee, you may apply for leave to file an appeal in forma pauperis. If you do not have counsel to act on your behalf and if you request it, the Clerk of the Court will prepare and file a Notice of Appeal on your behalf. You must make the request within 14 days. The Notice of Appeal must designate the judgment or order appealed from and the fact that you are appealing to the Court of Appeals. It should designate the portion of the proceedings not already on file that you deem necessary for the reporter to include. Anything further from counsel before I address Ms. Herrling for the final time? MR. BROWN: No, Your Honor. Thank you, Your Honor. MR. KESSEL: The defendant would like the clerk to file a Notice of Appeal and, obviously, I'm not her counsel on appeal. She would like appointment of counsel. THE COURT: Thank you. I'm not exactly sure about the mechanics with respect to the request for the -- both the request for counsel and the request for the filing of the Notice of

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1
              So I will advise the courtroom deputy clerk to
     Appeal.
 2
     handle the filing of the notice of the appeal to the
 3
      extent that there is anything further that I need to do
 4
      in order to authorize counsel to be appointed to
 5
     Ms. Herrling for purposes of appeal, then we can handle
     that perhaps in a separate proceeding or by separate
 6
 7
      filing.
 8
               Just a moment.
 9
               Counsel, is it possible, even though you're not
10
     going to be her counsel on appeal, is it possible for
11
      you to at least file the Notice of Appeal and then once
12
      that process has started, I think at that point, that's
13
      when the Court of Appeals, when you step out, that's
14
     when the Court of Appeals would appoint counsel, or is
15
      it your understanding it operates differently?
16
               MR. KESSEL: Well, Your Honor, I've seen it --
17
      I don't mind filing a Notice of Appeal. I just don't
18
     want to -- then the Ninth Circuit will look to me to see
19
     if I'm counsel. I ask that you relieve me for appeal
20
     purposes, but I'd be happy to file a Notice of Appeal
21
     for her.
22
               THE COURT: And were you appointed in this
23
     matter?
24
               MR. KESSEL: No.
25
               THE COURT: You're retained, but you're asking
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1
      to be released?
               MR. KESSEL: For trial level only.
 3
               THE COURT: I understand.
 4
               Mr. Brown?
 5
               MR. BROWN: I just think it's ordinarily done,
      the Defense counsel files the notice and I would
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 7
      actually like to talk to him before he does, and I don't
      think there's any reason for Your Honor to intervene in
 8
 9
      the normal process and do it immediately. It should go
10
      the normal way by filing out of court.
11
               THE COURT: Okay. Well, Mr. Kessel has
12
      indicated that he doesn't have an objection to filing
13
      the Notice of Appeal so we'll proceed with that,
14
      meaning, obviously, if something comes up, and for some
15
      reason that is not appropriate, then you can advise the
16
      Court.
17
               Anything further, Mr. Kessel?
18
               MR. KESSEL: No, Your Honor.
19
               THE COURT: Okay. Thank you.
20
               Thank you very much for that. And I guess I
      would just end with this --
21
22
               MR. KESSEL: One second.
23
               THE COURT: Yes.
24
               MR. KESSEL: Your Honor, I'm sorry. Excuse me,
25
      Your Honor. Thank you.
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Stated earlier, all of our lives have meaning and purpose. And this is true for you no less than anyone else who's here. You indicated here that you're a new woman, and that your sobriety has given you a clarity of purpose that you never had before. And I think you are to be commended for the sobriety that you've experienced. As you described for us, this is probably the longest period of sobriety that you've had, and I can only imagine that it's been very hard fought, and so you are to be commended for that, and it's something that you should be proud of.

I acknowledge that the road ahead completing your time in custody will not be easy, but I genuinely wish you all of the best in completing your sentence and discovering your true purpose. With that, I do want to thank everybody for their patience today. I particularly want to thank the court staff and the marshals for their patience, because the Court went very late today, and I appreciate everyone understands the seriousness of the matter today. And, with that, the Court is adjourned. Thank you.

(Whereupon, proceeding adjourned.)

- - -

1	CERTIFICATE					
2						
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5	UNITED STATES OF AMERICA :					
6	vs. : No. CR 23-00059-MEMF					
7	CAROLINE JOANNE HERRLING :					
8						
9						
10	I, MARIA BUSTILLOS, OFFICIAL COURT REPORTER, IN AND FOR THE					
11	UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT FOR THE CENTRAL DISTRICT OF					
12	CALIFORNIA, DO HEREBY CERTIFY THAT PURSUANT TO SECTION 753,					
13	TITLE 28, UNITED STATES CODE, THE FOREGOING IS A TRUE AND					
14	ECT TRANSCRIPT OF THE STENOGRAPHICALLY REPORTED					
15	PROCEEDINGS HELD IN THE ABOVE-ENTITLED MATTER AND THAT THE					
16	TRANSCRIPT PAGE FORMAT IS IN CONFORMANCE WITH THE REGULATIONS					
17	OF THE JUDICIAL CONFERENCE OF THE UNITED STATES.					
18	FEES CHARGED FOR THIS TRANSCRIPT, LESS ANY CIRCUIT FEE					
19	REDUCTION AND/OR DEPOSIT, ARE IN CONFORMANCE WITH THE					
20	REGULATIONS OF THE JUDICIAL CONFERENCE OF THE UNITED STATES.					
21						
22	/S///////					
23	MARIA R. BUSTILLOS DATE					
24	OFFICIAL REPORTER					
25						

•	59-MEMF Doci	ument 91 Filed 77 [2] - 47:23, 48:18	42:24	86 of 98 Page II 51:16, 54:20
\$			'=:= '	
	213 [1] - 1:24	79 [2] - 1:16, 3:2	Act [1] - 74:1	affirmed [1] - 37:15 8 (afford [3] - 53:18,
\$1,000,920 [1] - 72:15	213)894-6269 [1] - 2:7	7th [1] - 18:2	act [1] - 81:5	70:2, 80:25
\$1,500,000 [1] - 72:15	217 [1] - 10:21	0	acted [1] - 49:8	•
\$100 [2] - 59:7, 72:22	23-00059-MEMF [3] - 1:10, 4:5, 85:6	8	action [1] - 21:14 actions [1] - 50:13	afresh [1] - 62:9 aftercare [1] - 76:7
\$150,000 [3] - 47:24,			actual [10] - 22:18,	afternoon [9] - 4:9,
48:5, 48:22	240 [3] - 58:23, 59:2, 74:5	8 [2] - 37:19, 56:13	23:2, 23:3, 23:5,	4:13, 4:16, 4:17,
\$155,000 [1] - 48:20	250,000 [1] - 59:6	818)994-1422 [1] -	23:11, 23:24, 34:8,	4:18, 5:17, 27:17,
\$25 [2] - 72:7, 72:17	26 [2] - 49:13, 51:5	2:13	36:15, 44:4, 58:25	27:22, 27:23
\$3,887,051 [1] - 72:11	262 [1] - 59:1	894-2739 [1] - 1:24	add [1] - 41:7	agencies [1] - 78:15
\$447,051 [1] - 72:14	28 [1] - 85:13		added [1] - 11:6	agency [1] - 77:9
\$613,000 [1] - 40:1	2:07 [1] - 4:3	9	addendum [1] - 6:5	agents [3] - 4:11,
\$64,000 [1] - 42:14	2B [1] - 36:20		addiction [4] - 49:5,	4:18, 51:13
\$9,000,000 [1] - 19:7	2B1.1 [2] - 36:15,	9 _[5] - 20:9, 20:17,	49:13, 75:25, 78:5	aggravating [3] - 14:6,
	36:19	37:9, 38:16, 56:10	addition [3] - 13:15,	16:10, 49:16
1	33.13	90 [1] - 72:24	57:22, 57:23	ago [1] - 13:22
<u> </u>	3	90012 [2] - 1:24, 2:7	address [11] - 9:12,	agree [9] - 10:1, 10:8,
10 05 00		91 [1] - 51:16	12:21, 12:22, 14:12,	11:23, 11:24, 11:25,
/S [1] - 85:22		91436 [1] - 2:12	15:12, 21:3, 21:7,	14:1, 24:25, 36:3,
	3 [4] - 22:4, 35:10,	97 [1] - 45:14	46:15, 47:7, 79:12,	41:24
1	74:19, 74:20	0. [i] - 40. 14	81:14	agreed [1] - 58:2
	312 [1] - 2:6	Α	addressed [3] - 33:21,	agreement [5] - 58:2,
1 [3] - 35:10, 36:15,	327 [1] - 59:1	^	58:8, 58:9	75:21, 80:9, 80:10,
74:3	350 [1] - 1:23		addresses [2] - 22:4,	80:12
1.1 [1] - 36:21	3553 [2] - 59:10, 72:2	abilities [1] - 52:16	22:5	agrees [1] - 51:3
10 [3] - 5:15, 37:18,	36 [1] - 6:6	ability [4] - 7:9, 12:21,	addressing [1] - 13:11	ahead [9] - 28:3,
40:18	3612 [2] - 73:10, 73:15	73:12, 76:11	adequate [2] - 59:16,	28:15, 28:20, 28:23,
101 [1] - 50:8	3663(A) [1] - 72:12	able [9] - 33:3, 52:20,	70:2	31:15, 37:8, 54:5,
1030 [1] - 2:12	37 [1] - 6:4	60:17, 61:7, 63:20,	adjourned [2] - 84:22,	65:11, 84:13
106 [1] - 50:1	39 [1] - 58:21	66:1, 66:3, 67:5,	84:23	AKA [1] - 48:9
12254 [1] - 1:22	3B1.3 [1] - 22:4	73:20	adjustment [3] - 10:9,	albeit [1] - 24:11
13 [4] - 37:9, 38:16,		ABOVE [1] - 85:15	22:6, 22:16	alcohol [1] - 75:17
42:21, 56:10	4	ABOVE-ENTITLED [1]	adjustments [4] -	ALEX [2] - 2:10, 2:11
14 [3] - 39:11, 80:18,		- 85:15	10:6, 10:10, 10:15,	Alex [1] - 4:14
81:8	4 [2] - 3:2, 36:21	absolutely [2] - 41:13,	25:19	alias [1] - 48:9
149 [1] - 48:2	4455 [1] - 1:23	44:5	administer [1] - 42:7	allegation [1] - 14:18
15 [3] - 4:1, 53:13,	47 [4] - 37:12, 41:14,	abstain [1] - 75:17	admissible [2] -	allegations [1] - 15:25
75:10	42:20, 45:13	abuse [3] - 51:12,	11:25, 54:23	allocuting [1] - 27:12
15,2024 [1] - 1:18	4C1.1 [2] - 34:7, 34:22	75:14, 78:4	admission [2] - 47:22,	allow [2] - 65:25, 73:3
15-mintue [1] - 60:16	4E [1] - 36:19	Abuse [1] - 74:8	52:4	alluded [1] - 55:16
15-minute [1] - 5:15		abused [1] - 23:7	admissions [1] -	almost [2] - 47:11,
15910 [1] - 2:11	5	abusing [1] - 75:18	16:18	49:12
16 [1] - 39:12		acceptable [2] - 18:17, 76:18	admitted [1] - 25:2	amazed [2] - 43:10,
17 [3] - 37:21, 40:3,	5 000 07 40		adopt [2] - 35:21,	52:15
56:13	5 [3] - 36:9, 37:18,	acceptance [6] - 44:15, 44:17, 44:24,	58:12 adopted [1] - 10:14	amazing [1] - 52:17
18 [8] - 42:20, 47:16,	56:12	57:14, 57:16, 57:25	adult [1] - 47:23	ambiguous [1] - 24:2
47:18, 59:10, 72:1,	50,000 [1] - 59:5	accepted [1] - 57:20	adult [1] - 47.23 advantage [1] - 69:3	Amended [3] - 73:16,
72:12, 73:9, 73:14	500 [1] - 51:6	access [2] - 50:17,	advantage [1] - 69.3	74:17, 74:20
1984 [1] - 74:1	55 [1] - 6:5	79:25	51:23	amendment [1] - 14:2 amendments [2] -
1ST [1] - 1:23	56 [1] - 6:6	accordance [1] -	advice [1] - 22:22	59:25, 60:2
1st [1] - 58:19	5E1.2 [1] - 73:17	74:24	advise [6] - 4:25,	America [1] - 4:5
	6	according [2] - 17:16,	26:10, 34:1, 54:13,	AMERICA[3] - 4.5
2	6	42:13	82:1, 83:15	2:4, 85:5
		account [4] - 9:8,	advised [1] - 50:18	amount [8] - 23:19,
20 [1] - 76:19	62 [1] - 45:17	19:21, 58:18, 58:20	Advisory [2] - 58:13,	24:5, 25:4, 25:18,
20-04 [4] - 60:13,	638 [1] - 10:21	accountable [1] - 69:8	58:16	72:11, 72:13, 72:20,
73:17, 74:17, 74:21	64 [1] - 50:1	accounts [1] - 19:20	affect [1] - 11:9	73:4
10.11, 17.11, 17.21		accurate [4] - 10:25,	affected [1] - 28:25	analysis [1] - 58:18
2014 [1] - 47:25	1	16:20, 58:12, 66:19	affecting [1] - 67:9	AND [3] - 85:10,
	7	10.20, 30.12, 00.13		
2014 [1] - 47:25	7			
2014 [1] - 47:25 2015 [2] - 48:17, 48:21		acknowledge [2] - 61:19, 84:13	affects [2] - 29:10,	85:13, 85:15
2014 [1] - 47:25 2015 [2] - 48:17, 48:21 2016 [1] - 48:19	72 [1] - 18:23	acknowledge [2] - 61:19, 84:13	affects [2] - 29:10, 71:2	85:13, 85:15 AND/OR [1] - 85:19
2014 [1] - 47:25 2015 [2] - 48:17, 48:21 2016 [1] - 48:19 2022 [3] - 48:1, 48:17,		acknowledge [2] -	affects [2] - 29:10,	85:13, 85:15

41:25, 43:12, 44:4,

53:3, 53:11, 57:10

bottom [1] - 16:14

BOULEVARD[1] -

boyfriend [3] - 46:3,

50:21, 57:12

branded [1] - 69:7

brazen [2] - 50:4,

breach [2] - 22:17

break [5] - 5:19,

breached [1] - 22:25

12:15, 13:10, 47:2,

breaking [1] - 32:21

briefly [4] - 4:19, 21:7,

breath [1] - 75:15

brief [3] - 37:12,

42:21, 45:18

47:4, 52:25

bring [1] - 26:18

broken [1] - 51:25

brothers [1] - 69:12

BROWN [41] - 2:5,

2:11

50:11

62.18

calculation [6] - 5:9, 5:10, 5:12, 5:15, 54:12, 58:13 calculations [1] -23:23 **CALIFORNIA** [5] - 1:2, 1:17, 1:24, 4:1, 85:12 California [9] - 17:6, 17:12, 19:18, 48:5, 49:2, 51:7, 78:15, 78:24, 78:25 Canada [1] - 63:4 cannot [4] - 21:24, 39:9, 61:23, 67:12 car [1] - 53:15 card [2] - 24:4, 39:22 cards [2] - 39:14, 39:19 care [1] - 59:19 careful [1] - 44:1 Caroline [7] - 4:6, 28:1, 48:8, 48:25, 64:12, 74:2 **CAROLINE** [3] - 1:12,

2:10, 85:7

changed [1] - 24:12 channel [1] - 24:11 Chapter [1] - 34:10 character [2] - 53:9, 53:20 characteristics [3] -22:24, 59:13, 69:24 charge [1] - 13:24 charged [2] - 15:7, 39:20 **CHARGED** [1] - 85:18 **charges** [1] - 39:13 Charles [3] - 50:3, 70:15, 72:14 checked [1] - 48:5 cherry [1] - 29:21 child [1] - 63:5 **childhood** [1] - 52:5 children [1] - 52:6 **chose** [1] - 51:9 chosen [1] - 52:11 Christine [1] - 37:23 **CIRCUIT** [1] - 85:18 Circuit [3] - 10:4, 37:15, 82:18

applies [3] - 22:6, 40:17, 71:3 apply [13] - 11:13, 13:13, 14:23, 21:24, 23:16, 40:5, 41:12, 44:14, 55:14, 56:24, 61:24, 75:3, 81:3 appoint [1] - 82:14 appointed [2] - 82:4, 82:22 appointment [1] -81:20 appreciate [3] - 5:3, 66:13, 84:20 appreciated [1] - 28:5 appreciates [1] -67:14 apprised [1] - 15:4 appropriate [10] -8:25, 13:10, 14:17, 15:18, 55:25, 57:22, 60:7, 70:8, 76:23, 83:15 approval [3] - 77:6, 77:10, 77:25 approved [2] - 75:23,

7:22, 29:15, 49:9, 50:18, 55:9, 55:10 attorney's [1] - 19:20 attorneys [2] - 42:6, 52:22 attributed [1] - 23:25 authorities [1] - 16:13 authority [2] - 37:3, 69:7 authorize [1] - 82:4

В

authorizes [2] - 78:2,

available [1] - 59:21

avoid [2] - 58:1, 60:2

axe [1] - 53:11

aware [2] - 23:23, 39:3

78:10

baby [1] - 69:12 bad [3] - 42:22, 42:23, 67:6 **badly** [1] - 33:15 **balance** [1] - 72:5 Bank [1] - 39:21

circumstance [1] -16:10 circumstances [6] -54:16, 56:14, 59:12, 69:23, 73:2, 80:6 citation [1] - 9:20 cite [1] - 9:19 cited [1] - 10:20 Citibank [1] - 39:22 claim [2] - 41:21, 48:19 claimed [1] - 17:4 claiming [1] - 43:13 claims [3] - 20:25, 24:11, 48:22 clarification [2] -11:18, 14:20 clarify [1] - 41:8 clarity [1] - 84:5 clear [12] - 8:18, 8:23, 9:9, 9:18, 15:15, 18:15, 27:2, 36:8, 42:8, 53:23, 54:13, 54:16 clearly [3] - 49:9, 61:7, 66:1 Clerk [2] - 13:2, 81:6 CLERK [1] - 65:16 clerk [11] - 4:25, 6:9, 12:24. 26:13. 26:18. 33:25, 47:3, 60:16, 61:9, 81:18, 82:1 client [12] - 4:14, 6:18, 7:4, 14:14, 14:19, 16:1, 16:15, 19:2, 19:25, 21:3, 21:17, 76.14 client's [2] - 16:10, 78:17 close [5] - 6:7, 6:9, 26:17, 49:21 closed [2] - 33:25, 40:23 closer [1] - 32:4 closest [1] - 79:1 co [3] - 57:1, 57:4, 58:7 co-conspirator [1] -57:1 co-conspirators [2] -57:4, 58:7 Code [4] - 72:2, 72:12, 73:9, 73:15 CODE [1] - 85:13 collar [1] - 71:1 colleague [1] - 61:8 collection [1] - 75:1 college [1] - 52:7 comfortable [1] - 67:7 **coming** [1] - 17:19 commencement [1] -72:25 commended [2] -84:7, 84:11 comment [1] - 41:21

comments [4] - 52:25, 58:14, 58:15, 79:13 Commission [1] -79:19 commission [3] -23:9, 60:1, 79:22 commit [2] - 66:20, 66:25 Commitment [1] -79:17 committed [5] - 59:23, 66:21, 66:24, 67:5, 74:3 committing [1] - 48:9 common [1] - 22:24 communicate [1] -67:1 communication [1] -77:13 community [3] -74:22, 76:8, 76:19 companies [2] -39:12, 56:8 Company [1] - 39:24 compelling [2] -68:23, 69:22 compellingly [1] -62:13 compensation [1] -42:22 competent [1] - 16:20 complaint [6] - 48:17, 49:3, 49:25, 50:8, 51:16, 54:19 complete [1] - 79:20 completely [1] - 51:3 completing [2] -84:13, 84:15 comply [3] - 71:25, 73:16, 74:15 computer [2] - 50:9, 77:12 con [1] - 69:1 concealment [1] -23:9 concern [2] - 10:9, 25:13 concerned [1] - 36:12 **concerning** [4] - 54:4, 54:11, 61:17, 78:22 concerns [3] - 7:8, 15:25, 71:13 conclusion [1] - 38:21 conditions [2] - 74:14, 74:18 conduct [11] - 10:18, 23:25, 44:24, 57:15, 57:18, 57:23, 58:6, 59:17, 70:3, 70:7, 74:9 CONFERENCE [2] contribution [2] -

85:17, 85:20

79:23

22:17

confidential [2] - 6:8,

confidentiality [1] -

CONFORMANCE [2] -85:16, 85:19 conforming [1] -50:13 Congress' [2] - 9:4, 9:6 conjunctive [1] -14:10 connect [1] - 61:11 connection [2] - 19:1, 21:17 consent [1] - 78:9 consider [5] - 25:23, 28:18, 57:15, 57:17, 71:11 consideration [2] -25:15, 44:10 considered [7] - 5:16, 5:25, 6:3, 11:17, 23:21, 56:4, 74:7 considering [3] - 8:24, 9:10, 59:9 considers [1] - 71:9 conspiracy [3] -24:21, 39:23, 43:23 conspirator [1] - 57:1 conspirators [2] -57:4, 58:7 constitute [1] - 57:9 constitutes [1] - 44:13 consultant [1] - 47:25 consulting [3] - 47:21, 48:4, 58:20 Consulting [3] - 48:4, 48:24, 49:7 consumers [1] - 49:8 contact [2] - 33:4, 49:19 contacted [1] - 16:14 contention [3] - 23:1, 23:14, 24:19 contents [1] - 6:20 contest [3] - 8:8, 14:7, 21.16 contested [3] - 38:19, 39:1, 54:3 context [1] - 42:18 continue [3] - 31:12, 62:20, 68:20 continued [1] - 49:24 continuing [11] - 14:4, 14:8, 14:21, 15:1, 15:5, 15:10, 15:14, 15:16, 15:19, 33:15, 62:19 contractors [1] - 76:7 contradictory [1] -56:11 contrary [2] - 48:15, 80:7

controlled [1] - 75:8 controls [1] - 80:13 controvert [1] - 20:17 conversation [1] -20:2 conversations [1] -57:3 convicted [2] - 10:24, 60:4 **conviction** [5] - 11:3, 11:10, 11:11, 80:2, 80:11 convictions [3] -47:13, 49:12, 53:13 convincing [2] - 9:18, 54:16 cooperate [1] - 75:1 cooperating [1] -33:19 copies [1] - 79:22 copy [1] - 79:20 correct [10] - 16:8, 18:9, 23:17, 26:8, 35:3, 35:6, 38:24, 44:2, 53:25, 58:12 CORRECT [1] - 85:14 correctional [1] -59:20 correctly [1] - 35:13 cost [2] - 76:6, 81:2 counsel [26] - 4:7, 4:10, 4:16, 4:18, 8:2, 11:16, 28:1, 56:4, 56:12, 71:13, 71:19, 75:22, 78:18, 79:11, 79:24, 81:5, 81:14, 81:20, 81:21, 81:25, 82:4, 82:9, 82:10, 82:14, 82:19, 83:6 Counsel [6] - 5:25, 7:11, 17:21, 18:14, 36:17, 76:13 counsel's [1] - 36:6 counseling [3] -75:14, 76:1, 77:24 Count [1] - 74:3 counted [1] - 37:19 counterfeit [1] - 46:5 countering [1] - 16:15 **counting** [1] - 37:16 **counts** [5] - 55:17, 59:2, 79:5, 79:7, 79:10 couple [2] - 16:24, 45:19 course [5] - 39:21, 48:23, 49:10, 50:5, 75:20 COURT [156] - 1:1, 1:21, 4:3, 4:16, 4:21, 5:24, 6:20, 6:23, 7:2, 7:5, 7:8, 7:11, 7:17, 7:19, 7:22, 7:25, 8:2, 8:16, 9:16, 10:16, 11:22, 12:3, 12:11,

12:23, 13:5, 13:7,

14:20, 14:25, 15:20, 17:21, 18:6, 18:8, 88 18:11, 18:14, 18:20, 18:22, 20:6, 21:6, 21:11, 21:19, 22:2, 22:13, 23:1, 23:18, 24:17, 25:21, 26:2, 26:9, 26:16, 26:22, 26:24, 27:6, 27:9, 27:13, 27:16, 27:20, 27:22, 27:24, 28:7, 28:10, 28:14, 28:20, 28:23, 29:7, 30:1, 31:8, 31:21, 31:24, 32:1, 32:3, 32:9, 32:12, 32:19, 32:23, 33:3, 33:8, 33:11, 34:13, 34:19, 34:23, 35:1, 35:4, 35:7, 35:16, 35:18, 36:17, 36:20, 36:24, 37:5, 37:8, 38:1, 38:13, 39:2, 39:10, 40:21, 41:3, 43:24, 44:6, 45:6, 45:10, 45:16, 46:13, 53:22, 54:2, 54:9, 60:10, 60:12, 60:15, 60:22, 61:1, 61:5, 61:15, 62:3, 62:17, 63:11, 63:14, 63:18, 63:20, 64:1, 64:3, 64:8, 64:10, 64:14, 65:4, 65:13, 65:22, 67:10, 67:18, 68:3, 68:13, 68:16, 68:19, 69:10, 69:14, 69:18, 69:21, 71:19, 71:23, 73:25, 76:16, 78:25, 79:8, 79:10, 79:16, 80:21, 80:24, 81:22, 82:22, 82:25, 83:3, 83:11, 83:19, 83:23, 84:1, 85:10, 85:11 court [7] - 18:17, 24:5, 34:1, 66:4, 68:1, 83:10, 84:18 Court [87] - 9:3, 9:5, 9:6, 9:10, 11:12, 12:21, 12:22, 13:19, 14:8, 16:12, 16:24, 22:14, 23:10, 24:13, 24:14, 25:9, 25:14, 25:16, 28:18, 34:11, 34:16, 35:1, 35:13, 35:24, 44:11, 44:12, 45:11, 47:2, 47:17, 50:19, 51:10, 55:3, 55:4, 55:7, 55:18, 55:22, 56:4, 56:7, 56:14, 56:18, 56:20, 56:22, 56:24, 57:2, 57:7, 57:15, 57:17, 57:21, 57:24, 58:4, 63:15, 63:16, 64:19, 67:13, 67:21, 67:23,

41:25, 42:2

42:19

contributions [1] -

control [1] - 40:12

68:6, 68:25, 69:22, 70:7, 70:10, 70:14, 71:9, 71:11, 71:16, 73:2, 73:18, 73:20, 74:2, 74:6, 74:8, 75:5, 76:7, 78:2, 78:10, 78:18, 78:21, 80:15, 81:6, 81:10, 82:13, 82:14, 83:16, 84:19, 84:22 Court's [10] - 9:2, 10:17, 11:7, 13:11, 32:25, 37:15, 41:4, 54:14, 58:18, 60:19 Court-ordered [2] -75:5, 76:7 COURTHOUSE [1] -1:22 courtroom [14] - 6:7, 6:9. 6:11. 6:12. 8:5. 13:1, 26:12, 26:18, 33:24, 34:1, 40:23, 46:11, 61:8, 82:1 COURTROOM [12] -4:4, 12:25, 13:6, 26:19, 26:23, 27:1, 27:4, 27:7, 67:20, 68:14, 68:17, 69:16 courts [2] - 42:5, 52:22 CR [2] - 4:5, 85:6 credit [6] - 9:4, 9:7, 24:4, 39:14, 39:19, 39:22 creek [1] - 17:17 crew [1] - 52:21 crime [12] - 11:5, 13:16, 16:2, 47:14, 49:19, 59:1, 59:6, 66:12, 70:25, 71:1, 71:5, 71:8 crimed [1] - 52:2 crimes [6] - 50:11, 52:12, 59:17, 62:4, 68:12, 70:4 criminal [30] - 13:14, 13:18, 13:20, 13:22, 14:4, 14:9, 14:21, 15:1, 15:5, 15:10, 15:14, 15:17, 15:19, 20:3, 21:14, 34:8, 34:9, 34:16, 34:20, 35:2, 35:10, 35:12, 35:15, 47:8, 47:11, 55:2, 55:3, 58:21, 59:16, 70:3 criminality [2] - 35:14, 52:3 criminals [1] - 53:11 cross [1] - 27:14 cross-examination [1] - 27:14 cupcake [1] - 29:21 custody [7] - 58:22, 71:14, 72:21, 74:4, 75:10, 79:3, 84:14

cut [1] - 43:4 D dad [11] - 31:3, 31:13, 31:18, 32:13, 32:18, 62:2, 63:2, 63:5, 63:6, 65:8, 65:10 daddy [1] - 65:15 daily [1] - 47:15 data [1] - 77:13 **DATE**[1] - 85:23 days [5] - 47:23, 72:24, 75:10, 80:18, 81.8 De [1] - 10:20 dead [2] - 40:9, 69:3 deal [4] - 41:23, 42:5, 42:6, 49:11 death [20] - 13:16, 14:13, 14:19, 15:21, 15:22, 16:2, 16:6, 16:12, 19:1, 19:25, 20:4, 21:5, 21:17, 46:16, 46:19, 53:9, 58:5, 70:23, 71:3, 71.6 decedent [1] - 14:15 decedent's [1] - 37:14 decisions [1] - 25:22 declaration [3] -38:17, 45:12, 54:20 declines [1] - 55:4 deductions [1] - 76:23 deem [1] - 81:12 deemed [1] - 16:6 default [1] - 73:14 defect [1] - 80:4 defend [1] - 52:20 Defendant [1] - 1:13 defendant [78] - 8:22, 9:5, 14:5, 14:11, 20:3, 22:6, 22:8, 22:9, 22:18, 23:4, 23:7, 23:12, 24:9, 24:21, 25:2, 25:6, 34:9, 37:13, 40:19, 41:15, 42:3, 43:13, 44:18, 45:18, 45:24, 49:8, 49:20, 51:1, 51:17, 51:24, 52:3, 57:20, 59:13, 59:18, 59:24, 60:12, 67:24, 69:25, 70:4, 72:3, 72:10, 73:5, 73:11, 73:16, 73:19, 74:2, 74:6, 74:10, 74:12, 74:15, 74:23, 75:1, 75:2, 75:7, 75:9, 75:13, 75:17, 75:21, 75:22, 76:1, 76:2, 76:6, 76:9, 76:11, 76:18, 76:21, 76:25, 77:4, 77:7, 77:11,

77:19, 77:20, 77:22,

79:3, 80:8, 81:18 **DEFENDANT**[9] - 2:9, 5:23, 7:16, 7:18, 7:21, 7:24, 8:1, 80:20, 80:23 **Defendant's** [1] - 18:3 defendant's [12] -10:24, 23:25, 35:14, 35:24, 37:25, 45:22, 47:7, 73:2, 77:3, 77:5, 77:11, 78:5 defendants [4] - 9:7, 42:9, 51:25, 60:3 **Defense** [7] - 8:2, 8:20, 36:5, 36:11, 47:10, 75:21, 83:6 Defense's [3] - 15:14, 25:25, 41:21 **deference** [1] - 56:1 define [1] - 24:2 defined [1] - 15:17 definitely [2] - 43:20, 48:12 **definition** [1] - 55:13 **definitive** [1] - 38:3 degree [2] - 16:24, 47:22 delinquency [1] -73:14 Delta [1] - 26:7 demise [1] - 50:5 demonstrates [1] -58.4 deny[1] - 44:17 depart [1] - 58:15 Department [1] -78:16 departure [1] - 35:9 dependency [2] -75:25, 78:6 **DEPOSIT**[1] - 85:19 **DEPUTY** [14] - 4:4, 12:25, 13:6, 26:19, 26:23, 27:1, 27:4, 27:7, 63:14, 65:16, 67:20, 68:14, 68:17, 69:16 **Deputy** [1] - 13:1 deputy [2] - 61:8, 82:1 describe [2] - 70:6, 70:8 described [2] - 59:10, 84:8 desecrated [1] - 53:11 deserve [1] - 42:22 deserves [1] - 43:21 designate [2] - 81:8, 81:11 designed [2] - 63:2, 63.7 designs [4] - 63:24, 64:1, 64:5, 64:7 desist [3] - 49:1,

determination [2] -56:2, 59:8 determinations [1] -9:4 determine [1] - 76:1 determined [1] - 14:7 determining [4] -34:19, 43:18, 53:8, 71:9 deterrence [2] - 59:16, 70:3 devastating [2] -61:19, 71:2 developed [1] - 17:12 devices [1] - 77:13 died [1] - 53:7 different [2] - 26:5, 36:6 differently [2] - 15:11, 82:15 difficult [3] - 5:4, 67:12, 70:7 difficulties [1] - 13:8 difficulty [3] - 31:10, 65:24 directed [6] - 53:5, 75:12, 75:16, 76:5, 76:10. 76:19 directly [2] - 16:1, 23:25 director [1] - 76:4 disappearance [1] -50:3 discharged [2] - 76:3, 77:24 disclose [2] - 78:3, 78:11 disconnect [2] - 19:2, 21:17 discover [1] - 61:20 discovering [1] -84.16 discretion [4] - 34:16, 35:2, 35:11, 43:16 discuss [4] - 6:8, 18:17, 40:23, 46:10 discussed [1] - 71:12 **discussing** [1] - 18:15 discussion [1] - 8:21 disinherited [1] - 39:7 dismiss [1] - 79:7 dismissed [2] - 79:5, 79:11 disparities [1] - 60:3 disposal [2] - 44:4, 57:10 **disposing** [1] - 53:3 disproportionate [2] -11:2, 11:8 disputes [4] - 5:11, 38:3, 46:21, 54:11 disrespect [1] - 17:1

dissolve [2] - 53:4,

destroying [1] - 51:9

Detective [1] - 4:11

53:10 distinction [1] - 34:248 9 distress [2] - 20:15, 66:17 District [2] - 17:5, 37:15 **DISTRICT** [5] - 1:1, 1:2, 1:5, 85:11 **DIVISION** [1] - 1:3 **DNA**[1] - 75:2 **DO** [1] - 85:12 doctor [2] - 63:7, 64:4 Document [3] - 37:12, 41:14, 45:17 document [3] - 16:8, 17:25, 46:5 documents [7] - 6:2, 6:17, 6:22, 7:3, 7:15, 46:7, 54:22 dogs [1] - 30:15 dollar [3] - 24:4, 25:3, 25:18 dollars [3] - 42:16, 64:20, 72:5 done [5] - 10:2, 41:16, 43:5, 70:20, 83:5 down [3] - 25:11, 29:10, 65:20 downstairs [1] - 30:21 downward [2] - 35:9 driver's [1] - 77:1 drop[1] - 49:19 Drug [1] - 74:8 drug [12] - 15:6, 47:12, 49:5, 51:3, 51:15, 51:18, 51:19, 75:9, 75:11, 75:22, 75:25, 78:5 drugs [4] - 51:9, 51:14, 75:18, 76:2 due [8] - 10:22, 15:3, 15:15, 37:17, 71:4, 72:5, 72:6, 72:16 dump [1] - 53:15 dumping [1] - 53:5 during [10] - 47:18, 48:11, 49:14, 72:6, 72:16, 72:22, 74:22, 75:18, 75:20, 76:8

Ε

earned [2] - 47:24, 48:20 earning [1] - 48:4 easier [1] - 36:24 easy [2] - 24:3, 84:14 eat [1] - 30:21 ECF [10] - 6:4, 6:5, 6:6, 18:22, 18:23, 41:14, 42:20, 45:13, 45:17 Eckert [1] - 37:22 economic [1] - 73:2 edition [1] - 58:19

49:23, 50:12

despite [1] - 48:19

files [1] - 83:6

83:10, 83:12

81:15

filings [1] - 17:22

finally [1] - 57:14

Financial [2] - 72:8,

filing [7] - 81:3, 81:25,

82:2, 82:7, 82:17,

final [3] - 35:25, 79:13,

educational [1] -59:19 Edward [2] - 36:19, 36:22 effect [2] - 10:10, 11:2 effective [1] - 59:20 effects [3] - 66:12, 68:23, 77:14 efficiency [2] - 38:14, 39:11 eight [3] - 37:11, 47:17, 75:11 either [4] - 60:18, 71:19, 73:3, 79:11 electronic [1] - 77:13 **ELEVENTH**[1] - 2:6 eloquently [1] - 66:11 **Emmy** [1] - 29:1 emotional [1] - 70:24 employed [4] - 76:16, 76:21, 76:22, 77:7 employment [1] - 49:6 ENCINO [1] - 2:12 end [4] - 33:11, 35:12, 83:21, 84:1 enforceable [1] -80:12 enforcement [3] -17:20, 77:15, 77:18 engage [1] - 14:21 engaged [2] - 44:24, 70:11 English [1] - 13:1 enhancement [15] -21:20, 21:24, 23:2, 23:3, 23:6, 23:11, 40:17, 41:12, 44:4, 44:13, 55:14, 56:17, 56:23, 57:19, 71:3 entered [2] - 80:9, 80:18 enterprise [9] - 14:4, 14:9, 14:22, 15:2, 15:5, 15:10, 15:14, 15:17, 15:19 entitled [2] - 18:3, 20:22 **ENTITLED** [1] - 85:15 entrepreneur [1] -47:19 equal [4] - 40:25, 41:9, 41:22, 56:23 equals [1] - 43:13 equity [1] - 73:24 especially [1] - 59:11 established [2] -59:22, 73:19 estate [13] - 19:7, 20:10, 20:16, 21:15, 23:20, 25:7, 25:10, 25:11, 33:22, 37:14, 55:17, 55:22, 64:13 Estate [2] - 35:23, 55:15 estates [2] - 52:18, 52:23

euphemistically [1] -71:1 evaluation [2] - 74:10, 77:23 evaluations [1] -78:12 events [1] - 13:25 evidence [36] - 9:21, 9:23, 10:3, 10:24, 11:13, 11:16, 11:19, 11:20, 14:3, 14:18, 15:16, 16:1, 19:12, 20:5, 22:12, 24:8, 38:11, 38:20, 38:23, 42:15, 44:8, 44:12, 46:16, 48:14, 49:6, 49:10, 49:14, 53:7, 54:17, 54:18, 56:10, 56:11, 57:8, 58:4, 58:5, 58:8 **EWUSI** [1] - 1:5 EWUSI-MENSAH [1] -1:5 exactly [2] - 37:7, 81:23 examination [1] -27:14 examples [1] - 46:10 exceed [1] - 75:11 excelled [1] - 52:10 exceptions [1] - 80:17 excluding [2] - 14:11, 78:14 exclusions [1] - 20:2 exclusively [1] - 59:11 excuse [5] - 22:4, 54:16, 74:20, 83:24 excused [1] - 76:16 executed [1] - 51:13 exhibit [5] - 18:8, 18:23, 39:7, 39:25, 56:25 Exhibit [1] - 18:10 exhibits [1] - 38:17 exit [1] - 6:11 **expense** [1] - 81:2 expenses [3] - 49:4. 64:17. 64:21 experience [1] - 42:1 experienced [2] -37:6, 84:8 experiences [1] -71:14 expertise [1] - 42:2 explain [4] - 5:5, 6:20, 7:22, 9:1 explained [13] - 7:5, 43:5, 44:7, 62:6, 62:7, 62:9, 62:12, 63:22, 63:23, 66:7, 66:9, 66:11, 66:16 explaining [4] - 39:7, 41:15, 66:15, 68:23 explanation [1] - 9:1

explicitly [1] - 45:8

extent [2] - 58:14,

extraordinary [1] -50:11 extreme [1] - 71:5 extremely [2] - 11:2, 11:8 eyes [2] - 25:13, 52:9 F F.3.A [1] - 73:10 F.3d [1] - 10:21 face [2] - 29:5, 42:4 faces [1] - 71:4 facilitate [1] - 78:4 facilitated [1] - 23:9 facility [1] - 51:19 fact [9] - 22:9, 24:3, 25:1, 25:23, 46:23, 48:24, 48:25, 71:6, 81:9 factor [2] - 11:1, 47:9 factors [6] - 11:8, 11:11, 11:17, 59:9, 69:21, 71:9 facts [3] - 11:4, 22:19, 59:9 factual [2] - 10:13, 44:19 fair [7] - 24:22, 26:4, 35:25, 55:18, 55:21, 55:24, 70:21 falsely [2] - 46:4, 50:23 family [6] - 52:7, 65:11, 66:8, 69:11, 69:13, 70:17 fan [1] - 70:21 far [6] - 13:18, 14:1, 24:12, 31:11, 36:11, 43:22 Fargo [1] - 39:21 father [6] - 32:6, 61:9, 61:12, 64:9, 64:10, 64:11 fed [1] - 30:17 federal [2] - 77:9, 77:20 FEE [1] - 85:18 fee [1] - 81:3 FEES [1] - 85:18 felony [1] - 53:13

72:19 financial [5] - 40:7, 40:19, 56:15, 75:5 financially [2] - 52:8, 68:10 fine [8] - 6:25, 7:2, 8:15, 27:16, 39:17, 59:5, 73:20, 76:15 fines [1] - 73:18 finish [1] - 68:24 firm [1] - 48:4 first [12] - 12:4, 15:3, 20:24, 28:3, 29:5, 33:18, 34:6, 45:20, 50:14, 53:4, 60:19, 61:9 fit [1] - 55:12 five [4] - 41:5, 41:19, 43:22, 56:19 flashbacks [2] -29:25, 30:2 flinched [1] - 53:12 FLOOR [1] - 2:6 floor [1] - 53:6 fluctuate [1] - 55:22 fluctuated [1] - 55:23 flying [1] - 53:17 following [4] - 5:25, 57:8, 71:24, 74:14 follows [1] - 72:13 FOR [3] - 85:10, 85:11, 85:18 FOREGOING [1] -85.13 forfeiture [3] - 45:3, 58:2, 73:22 forged [1] - 37:21 forget [1] - 43:11 form [1] - 77:2 forma [1] - 81:4 FORMAT[1] - 85:16 forth [5] - 29:22, 29:23, 59:24, 63:10, 74:19 fought [1] - 84:10 four [4] - 34:10, 41:18, 43:17, 43:22 **Four** [1] - 57:18 fragile [4] - 29:2, 46:22, 46:23, 62:10 fraud [11] - 24:4, 25:19, 37:17, 37:25, 39:23, 40:10, 48:10, 49:22, 50:24, 53:18, 70:25

fraudulent [2] - 48:24,

50:6 90 fraudulently [6] -17:13, 17:14, 24:19, 24:20, 25:24, 36:1 FRIDAY [2] - 1:18, 4:1 friend [3] - 29:8, 30:18, 30:20 friends [1] - 70:17 **FRIMPONG** [1] - 1:5 front [1] - 7:12 **fully** [1] - 40:3 fund [1] - 59:7 fundamental [1] - 80:4 funded [1] - 19:21 future [1] - 73:3 G

gains [1] - 75:5 general [1] - 10:22 General [6] - 60:13, 73:16, 74:17, 74:19, 74:20, 74:21 generally [1] - 80:12 genuinely [1] - 84:14 ghost [1] - 51:20 given [8] - 8:22, 18:15, 19:12, 25:8, 42:19, 55:19, 56:1, 84:5 gleaned [1] - 18:13 govern [1] - 58:16 Government [25] -4:10. 9:3. 9:13. 9:19. 10:13, 13:11, 16:22, 19:8, 19:16, 19:23, 20:8, 27:9, 28:1, 36:7, 38:22, 41:5, 44:3, 46:4, 51:3, 54:5, 54:19, 57:6, 73:22, 79:6, 81:2 Government's [14] -8:20, 8:21, 15:4, 15:22, 16:9, 18:3, 20:12, 20:20, 35:21, 36:3, 37:12, 40:3, 41:8, 44:22 granted [1] - 12:5 great [3] - 42:18, 45:16, 49:11 greater [2] - 24:15, 71:25 greatly [1] - 67:14 grew [1] - 52:2 groups [1] - 51:6 guess [5] - 25:3, 34:14, 36:9, 41:4, 83:20 Guideline [1] - 73:17 guideline [2] - 55:7, 59:4 quidelines [18] - 5:8, 5:10, 5:12, 5:14, 9:20, 10:25, 23:23, 25:9, 36:12, 54:4, 54:12, 56:1, 58:19,

felt [5] - 29:12, 30:4,

34:11, 43:3, 62:13

few [2] - 42:15, 80:16

fiduciary [2] - 22:23,

file [8] - 48:18, 48:20.

81:4, 81:6, 81:12,

filed [7] **-** 6:1, 6:14,

34:4, 80:17

18:1, 18:2, 18:16,

81:19, 82:11, 82:20

Fidelity [1] - 39:24

figure [1] - 33:13

24:14

58:22, 58:25, 59:3, 59:5, 59:25 Guidelines [2] - 58:13, 58:16 guilty [2] - 80:2, 80:5 guns [1] - 51:21 guys [2] - 45:19, 45:20

Н

habit [1] - 7:1 hacked [1] - 70:21 hacking [1] - 53:4 Hadley [1] - 41:17 half [1] - 29:23 hand [1] - 71:11 handle [3] - 64:17, 82:2, 82:5 hands [2] - 24:13, 24:14 hang [1] - 69:17 happy [2] - 30:14, 82:20 hard [2] - 25:8, 84:10 hardened [1] - 53:11 harm [4] - 40:7, 40:8, 40:19, 56:15 health [5] - 51:10, 71:13, 74:9, 77:23, 78:12 hear [46] - 5:8, 5:13, 12:6, 12:16, 13:1, 13:3, 26:17, 26:22, 27:1, 27:3, 27:4, 27:18, 27:20, 27:21, 30:2, 31:14, 31:25, 32:2, 32:21, 33:3, 33:5, 33:10, 33:17, 35:22, 47:4, 54:3, 60:19, 61:2, 61:4, 61:5, 61:7, 61:23, 62:3, 62:5, 63:13, 63:15, 63:18, 63:20, 63:21, 65:25, 66:1, 66:5, 67:18, 67:19, 67:21, 67:22 heard [16] - 5:14, 9:14, 9:24, 11:15, 13:17, 22:10, 28:3, 28:16, 33:18, 36:5, 44:16, 53:25, 60:6, 61:9, 69:19, 78:18 **HEARING** [1] - 3:2 hearing [8] - 5:12, 27:25, 28:17, 33:6, 61:17, 61:18, 61:24, 68:21 hearsay [3] - 11:24, 16:20, 54:23 heart [1] - 63:4 heavily [1] - 56:24 heirs [2] - 38:23, 50:9 HELD [1] - 85:15 Hello [5] - 26:21,

63:15, 67:20, 68:14,

68:17 hello [13] - 26:22, 27:19, 27:20, 65:17, 67:20, 67:21, 68:14 help [2] - 29:11, 34:15 helpful [1] - 36:23 helpless [3] - 29:13, 30:4, 30:5 hereby [1] - 74:3 HEREBY [1] - 85:12 heroin [1] - 51:21 Herrling [35] - 4:6, 4:15, 4:17, 5:3, 7:13, 7:14, 12:5, 13:14, 21:7, 21:22, 22:20, 22:21, 28:1, 28:18, 40:25, 41:22, 44:23, 48:3, 54:21, 54:22, 55:1, 55:8, 56:20, 58:7, 68:4, 70:6, 70:11, 70:14, 70:19, 74:2, 78:19, 79:13, 80:1, 81:15, 82:5 HERRLING [3] - 1:12, 2:10, 85:7 Herrling's [5] - 21:4, 66:12, 71:5, 71:14, 78:22 herself [6] - 23:15, 41:19, 49:13, 54:21, 55:9, 55:12 high [4] - 47:18, 47:21, 48:11, 52:2 high-crimed [1] - 52:2 higher [5] - 10:5,

10:23, 11:3, 43:19, 43:20 highly [1] - 52:16

himself [2] - 19:17, 31:1 hire [2] - 29:14, 29:15 history [22] - 13:14, 13:19, 13:20, 13:23, 16:17, 20:3, 34:8, 34:10, 34:17, 34:20, 35:2, 35:10, 35:12, 35:15, 47:8, 47:11, 49:17, 55:2, 55:4,

58:21, 59:12, 69:24 hold [7] - 65:20, 68:2, 68:15, 68:18, 69:8 holds [1] - 22:8

home [7] - 31:5, 32:18, 39:16, 39:19, 46:20, 47:20, 57:11 homemade [1] - 51:20

homes [1] - 51:25 homicide [2] - 16:3, 50:2

honest [2] - 43:10, 47:19 honestly [2] - 48:13,

68:6

Honor [86] - 4:9, 4:13, 6:19, 7:1, 8:15, 9:15, 10:1, 10:11, 11:21,

13:19, 43:22, 4:10. 15:9, 15:13, 16:3, 16:8, 16:19, 16:25, 17:19, 17:24, 18:1, 18:5, 18:10, 18:21, 18:24, 19:3, 20:5, 21:1, 21:10, 22:12, 22:19, 23:17, 23:22, 25:7, 25:20, 26:8, 27:8, 27:11, 34:6, 34:7, 36:10, 36:22, 37:7, 37:10, 38:6, 38:9, 39:8, 39:13, 41:13, 41:20, 42:7, 42:10, 43:17, 45:4, 45:15, 46:1, 47:6, 51:17, 51:23, 51:24, 52:24, 53:2, 53:21, 54:1, 54:8, 60:9, 60:11, 60:14, 69:20, 71:17, 71:18, 71:21, 71:22, 73:23, 78:24, 79:6, 79:9, 79:14, 79:15, 81:16, 81:17, 82:16, 83:8, 83:18, 83:24, 83:25 HONORABLE [1] - 1:5 19:18, 20:14, 20:18,

hope [2] - 18:4, 61:24 host [1] - 51:7 hours [1] - 76:19 house [25] - 17:12,

20:22, 21:13, 21:14, 29:18, 30:15, 31:6, 32:14, 40:11, 40:15, 43:1, 45:2, 45:8, 45:20, 45:25, 50:20, 53:6, 62:12, 64:18, 64:24, 65:1, 65:3 houses [1] - 52:18

human [1] - 70:16 hundred [1] - 72:4 hungry [1] - 40:14 hunted [1] - 50:7 husband [3] - 66:25,

68:9, 71:4

ID [1] - 50:23 idea [4] - 16:15, 20:18, 35:1, 40:24 identification [2] -37:2, 77:3 identified [4] - 8:18, 9:3, 36:7, 73:21 identities [2] - 37:19, 56:13 identity [5] - 46:5, 49:11, 57:13, 62:15 ignore [2] - 34:8, 38:11 ignored [1] - 36:12 illicit [1] - 75:17

17:11 **illnesses** [1] - 51:10 imagine [2] - 67:12, 84:10 immediate [1] - 73:3 immediately [2] -72:5, 83:9 immoral [1] - 70:5 **importance** [1] - 66:7 importantly [2] -15:12, 17:15 impose [1] - 43:17 imposed [1] - 71:20 imposing [1] - 71:16 imprisonment [3] -72:6, 72:17, 74:12 IN [5] - 4:3, 85:10, 85:15, 85:16, 85:19 inaccurate [1] - 16:23 inactive [2] - 48:7, 48:16 inappropriate [1] - 9:6 Inaudible [4] - 26:25, 31:23, 63:7, 68:12 inaudible [18] - 31:18, 32:22, 33:2, 62:21, 63:8, 63:10, 64:9, 64:13, 64:16, 65:2, 65:3, 65:6, 65:7, 65:12, 65:15, 67:17, 68:7 incapable [1] - 50:13 incarceration [1] -78.22

74:18 income [3] - 49:6, 49:14. 75:3 inconsistent [3] -44:24, 57:16, 57:24 incorrigible [1] -49:17 increase [1] - 10:6 increased [1] - 23:10 increasing [1] - 9:8 indeed [1] - 56:8 independent [2] -44:8, 56:16 index [1] - 50:9 indicate [5] - 9:18, 20:16, 22:19, 37:5, 56:1 indicated [17] - 8:10, 10:4, 13:12, 16:7,

19:8, 20:23, 28:2,

31:13, 32:5, 33:22,

44:20, 46:21, 53:2,

inclined [5] - 25:15,

35:21, 36:3, 55:4,

include [3] - 75:25,

included [3] - 34:20,

77:23, 81:13

34:21, 79:17

includes [4] - 6:1,

36:14, 37:1, 75:15

including [2] - 14:17,

56:21

58:3, 83:12, 84:4 indicates [4] - 9:19, 91 25:5, 57:18, 57:20 indicating [7] - 20:17, 21:2, 22:15, 24:6, 24:8, 38:18, 39:25 indication [1] - 14:8 indications [1] - 42:11 indicative [1] - 35:14 indicia [4] - 11:24, 16:21, 22:7, 54:24 **indictment** [1] - 79:7 indictments [1] - 15:8 individual [3] - 4:23, 37:1, 40:7 individualized [1] -59:8 individuals [4] -16:14, 38:15, 38:19, 41:11 infer [2] - 19:16, 48:23 **information** [8] - 9:10, 28:17, 30:7, 38:12, 57:13, 74:3, 78:13, 79:9 inherit [1] - 21:16 inheritance [2] -37:24, 75:4 initial [2] - 20:2, 58:17 Inmate [2] - 72:8, 72:18 inquire [1] - 27:9 inquiring [1] - 12:18 Inspector [1] - 4:12 instance [3] - 21:23, 45:1, 55:12 insufficient [1] - 11:20 Insurance [1] - 39:24 intelligence [2] - 42:3, 52:21 intended [9] - 24:1, 24:7, 24:22, 25:1, 25:16, 26:5, 36:2, 55:20, 55:25 Intended [1] - 24:1 intent [2] - 9:6, 19:15 intention [2] - 24:20, 55:16 interaction [1] - 43:3 interest [3] - 10:25, 73:10, 73:12 interrupt [10] - 5:21, 24:18, 31:9, 32:20, 33:15, 34:13, 63:22, 65:14, 68:13 interrupting [1] - 66:2 intervene [1] - 83:8

interviewed [2] -

17:20, 51:14

interviews [1] - 19:5

investigation [1] -

investigations [1] -

50:12

15:8

investigated [1] - 50:2

illness [2] - 16:17,

investigators [1] -50:22 **invincible** [1] - 50:15 involuntary [1] - 80:3 involved [4] - 11:5, 14:16, 47:14, 65:7 involvement [1] - 25:2 involves [1] - 33:23 irony [1] - 51:17 **IS** [2] - 85:13, 85:16 issue [12] - 9:11, 9:14, 9:16, 14:13, 14:14, 19:24, 21:3, 21:12, 22:5, 33:21, 33:23, 79:12 issued [2] - 49:23, 60:1 issues [4] - 8:12, 8:17, 14:16, 54:4 item [1] - 4:4 items [1] - 9:2 itself [2] - 11:20, 41:20

J

Jackie [1] - 72:14 jail [1] - 45:23 jailed [1] - 50:16 James [1] - 41:17 Jason [1] - 50:23 Jesus [1] - 10:21 jet [1] - 53:18 JOANNE [1] - 85:7 Joanne [3] - 4:6, 28:1, 74.2 job [1] - 68:23 joining [3] - 4:24, 27:24, 51:8 Jonathan [1] - 41:18 JUDGE [1] - 1:5 judge [3] - 56:2, 65:18. 78:9 judgment [4] - 73:8, 74:1, 80:18, 81:9 Judgment [1] - 79:17 judgment's [1] - 74:24 judgments [1] - 75:4 JUDICIAL [2] - 85:17, 85:20 jumped [1] - 31:1 jumping [1] - 17:17 June [1] - 72:14 jurisdiction [1] - 17:11 justice [8] - 43:25, 44:3, 46:8, 49:22, 53:3, 57:5, 57:7,

K

57:10

Kantor [9] - 41:2, 41:3, 41:10, 41:22, 42:1, 42:12, 43:1, 43:19, 56:23 keep [1] - 67:21 keeps [2] - 32:21, 51:20 kept [2] - 29:16, 39:20 KESSEL [54] - 2:10, 2:11. 4:13. 6:19. 6:22, 7:1, 7:3, 7:7, 7:10, 8:15, 10:1, 11:21, 12:2, 12:8, 12:18, 13:18, 14:24, 15:1, 15:24, 17:24, 18:7, 18:9, 18:12, 18:18, 18:21, 18:24, 20:19, 21:8, 21:12, 21:25, 22:10, 22:15, 23:17, 23:22, 24:25, 25:25, 26:8, 26:15, 41:2, 60:9, 60:14, 69:20, 71:18, 71:21, 76:15, 78:23, 79:14, 81:18, 82:16, 82:24, 83:2, 83:18, 83:22, 83:24

Kessel [22] - 4:14, 4:17, 5:20, 5:21, 6:16, 8:7, 9:17, 12:11, 12:13, 13:9, 24:17, 33:20, 34:14, 38:17, 39:15, 40:24, 44:7, 44:16, 60:8, 60:12, 83:11, 83:17 Kessel's [3] - 33:15, 38:2, 38:9 kidnapping [1] - 11:6

kidnapping [1] - 11:6 kids [1] - 63:5 killed [2] - 19:17, 30:25 kills [1] - 19:11 kind [2] - 67:2, 67:16 kindergarten [1] -

52:7

kinds [3] - 59:21, 68:12 knowing [4] - 30:6, 62:14, 64:22, 68:11 knowledge [1] - 38:18 knows [3] - 51:10,

69:5, 69:6 **Kroth** [11] - 41:1, 41:10, 41:15, 41:22, 41:25, 43:19, 46:6, 50:23, 52:13, 53:13, 56:23

kroth [1] - 43:2

L

LA [1] - 4:5 lack [5] - 10:12, 11:16, 15:11, 15:15, 47:7 lady [2] - 67:16, 69:1 laid [1] - 19:13 landscaping [2] -64:6, 64:7 language [2] - 10:19,

14.5 **LAPD**[2] - 4:11, 50:2 larger [1] - 42:12 last [8] - 20:24, 25:12, 47:16, 52:5, 63:25, 68:3, 68:24, 71:6 late [1] - 84:20 latter [1] - 11:21 laundering [1] - 42:14 LAW [1] - 2:10 law [15] - 10:17, 10:18, 15:17, 17:19, 24:4, 49:3, 49:24, 49:25, 50:13, 59:15, 61:21, 70:2, 77:15, 77:18, 8:08 lawfully [1] - 24:23 Lawrence [1] - 37:22 lawsuit [1] - 40:1 lawyer [2] - 63:6, 64:4 lawyer's [1] - 16:18 lawyers [1] - 19:6 leader [11] - 13:15, 14:6, 40:22, 42:10, 42:11, 42:23, 42:25, 43:18, 43:21, 56:20,

56:22 leader/organizer [1] - 56:18 leadership [2] - 14:3, 52:21 leads [1] - 25:18 learned [1] - 17:2

least [12] - 13:22, 14:16, 16:20, 16:21, 18:13, 19:7, 24:8, 46:19, 56:19, 72:22, 75:10, 82:11 leave [4] - 12:16, 20:13, 20:18, 81:3 leaving [1] - 20:8 led [2] - 41:11, 50:5 left [4] - 17:10, 20:21, 62:19, 73:24 legal [4] - 24:11,

71:15, 77:4, 77:5 legitimate [1] - 49:14 legitimately [2] - 22:8, 47:25

lenders [1] - 39:16 length [1] - 9:1 leniency [3] - 47:11, 51:2, 51:18 LESS [1] - 85:18 less [5] - 24:2, 26:7,

72:7, 72:17, 84:3 letter [2] - 49:1, 49:23 level [3] - 43:19, 58:21, 83:2 levels [1] - 23:10

liberty [1] - 10:24 license [1] - 77:1 licensing [1] - 77:8 lie [3] - 50:21, 57:12,

58:1

lies [2] - 49:21, 50:25 life [5] - 19:14, 19:22, 63:10, 66:17, 70:18 lifetime [1] - 67:4 likely [2] - 8:23, 73:20 limited [1] - 61:18 line [2] - 12:24, 16:14 list [2] - 8:11, 8:13 listed [2] - 16:18, 54:10 listen [2] - 65:19 listening [2] - 28:21, 28:23 listing [1] - 41:18 lists [1] - 50:10 literally [2] - 38:6, 68:8 litigation [3] - 47:20, 47:25, 48:3 litter [1] - 30:16 lived [2] - 17:4, 19:21 lives [3] - 29:19, 70:18, 84:2 living [4] - 20:11, 49:4, 51:19, 64:21 local [2] - 77:9, 78:14 location [1] - 78:22 longest [1] - 84:9 look [5] - 14:2, 25:10,

25:16, 39:4, 82:18

looked [1] - 14:9

looted [1] - 39:18

loss [17] - 23:19,

LOS [4] - 1:17, 1:24,

23:23, 24:1, 24:7,

24:22, 25:1, 25:16,

25:19, 26:6, 36:2,

36:15, 37:6, 46:20,

losses [1] - 23:24

48:22, 55:25, 56:12,

looks [1] - 61:7

2:7, 4:1

71:4

lost [6] - 13:4, 13:6, 19:17, 40:11, 40:17, 62:11 lottery [1] - 75:4 loved [1] - 52:9 loved [1] - 29:3 Lowenstein [7] -23:20, 24:6, 25:3, 33:22, 35:23, 55:15, 72:14 lowenstein [1] - 24:12 lye [2] - 53:4, 53:10

М

Lyndon [1] - 4:12

M-A-R-K-E-S-H-A [1] - 28:12 M-I-R-A-C-L-E [1] - 28:12 ma'am [5] - 28:19, 61:10, 62:1, 62:16, 68:5 MAAME[1] - 1:5 **main** [3] - 10:9, 25:13,92 42:10 man [1] - 70:16 manipulate [1] - 69:6 manipulator [1] - 69:1 manner [4] - 23:8, 53:8, 59:21, 61:21 March [1] - 18:2 MARCH [2] - 1:18, 4:1 MARIA [3] - 1:21, 85:10, 85:23 mark [1] - 58:17 Mark [1] - 4:12 Markesha [1] - 28:11 market [8] - 24:22, 25:5, 25:8, 26:4, 35:25, 55:18, 55:21, 55:24 married [2] - 20:24, 65:10 Marshal [1] - 79:4 marshals [1] - 84:19 material [5] - 5:7, 6:8, 33:24, 44:25, 71:12 materials [1] - 79:23 MATTER[1] - 85:15 matter [6] - 4:22, 18:18, 64:23, 67:3, 82:23, 84:21 matters [1] - 54:14 Maurice [1] - 61:13 maximum [1] - 59:1 mean [8] - 30:8, 31:2, 46:9, 46:23, 50:4, 62:22, 63:9, 67:17 meaning [5] - 15:2, 19:15, 70:18, 83:14, 84.2 means [2] - 37:2, 79:2 measure [2] - 55:21, 55:25 mechanics [1] - 81:23 media [1] - 77:14

medical [1] - 59:19 medications [6] -66:22, 66:23, 66:24, 67:6, 67:8, 75:18 meetings [1] - 51:7 members [2] - 6:10, 24:21 MENSAH [1] - 1:5 mental [7] - 16:17, 17:11, 19:13, 29:16, 74:9, 77:22, 78:11 mentally [6] - 29:2, 29:10, 30:5, 46:22, 46:23, 62:10 mentioned [3] - 7:15, 20:9, 20:10 meritorious [1] -34:11 meth [1] - 51:21 methamphetamine [4]

- 47:16, 50:15,

50:17, 51:11 Meza [1] - 38:16 Mezas [1] - 10:20 MEZAS [1] - 10:20 microphone 131 -6:24, 7:12, 80:22 might [2] - 20:23, 42:15 million [2] - 20:9, 20:17 millionaire [1] - 50:10 mind [3] - 19:13, 33:20, 82:17 mini [1] - 53:16 minor [2] - 11:5, 13:24 minute [3] - 63:17, 65:18, 65:21 Miracle [5] - 4:24, 28:11, 30:23, 31:4, 37:22 missed [1] - 32:9 misspoke [1] - 36:18 misused [1] - 37:20 misusing [1] - 69:3 mitigating [2] - 47:9, 48.12 mitigation [1] - 71:12 moment [10] - 6:2, 6:7, 12:12. 23:6. 36:17. 36:25, 58:10, 67:19, 76:13, 82:8 money [9] - 29:17, 39:17, 40:15, 42:14, 42:19, 42:25, 43:15, 49:8, 49:11 monies [1] - 75:3 month [2] - 51:8, 75:12 monthly [3] - 40:13, 64:17, 72:21 months [2] - 58:23, 74:5 mood [1] - 30:13 most [6] - 9:2, 29:2, 47:9, 49:16, 59:20, 69.22 mostly [1] - 30:19 mother [4] - 45:7, 45:19, 45:22, 63:3 move [2] - 9:13, 35:10 moves [1] - 79:7 moving [3] - 15:12, 22:1, 37:10 MR [92] - 4:9, 4:13, 6:19, 6:22, 7:1, 7:3, 7:7, 7:10, 8:15, 9:15, 10:1, 11:21, 12:2, 12:8, 12:18, 13:18, 14:24, 15:1, 15:24, 17:24, 18:7, 18:9, 18:12, 18:18, 18:21, 18:24, 20:19, 21:8, 21:12, 21:25, 22:10, 22:15, 23:17, 23:22, 24:25, 25:25, 26:8, 26:15, 27:11, 27:14,

34:6, 34:18, 34:22, 34:25, 35:3, 35:6, 35:8, 35:17, 36:10, 36:18, 36:21, 37:4, 37:7, 37:10, 38:5, 38:25, 39:4, 39:13, 41:2, 41:13, 44:5, 45:4, 45:7, 45:15, 45:17, 47:6, 54:1, 54:8, 60:9, 60:11, 60:14, 69:20, 71:17, 71:18, 71:21, 71:22, 73:23, 76:15, 78:23, 79:6, 79:9, 79:14, 79:15, 81:16, 81:18, 82:16, 82:24, 83:2, 83:5, 83:18, 83:22, 83:24 MS [34] - 26:21, 27:3, 27:19, 27:21, 27:23, 28:6, 28:8, 28:11, 28:19, 28:22, 28:24, 29:8, 31:16, 31:22, 31:25, 32:2, 32:8, 32:11, 32:13, 32:22, 33:2, 33:7, 33:10, 61:4, 62:19, 64:9, 64:12. 64:15. 65:15. 66:20, 67:15, 68:5, 68:24. 69:11 multiple [1] - 15:6 murder [1] - 16:2

Ν

61:20, 80:17, 81:7,

muscle [1] - 53:15

must [5] - 50:14,

81:8

name [13] - 20:24, 28:4, 28:6, 28:10, 28:11, 37:21, 48:7, 48:25, 77:3, 77:4, 77:5 namely [1] - 54:19 names [1] - 50:20 narcotic [2] - 75:25, 78:5 Narcotics [1] - 51:6 National [1] - 39:24 naturally [1] - 22:24 nature [6] - 11:10, 55:11, 57:1, 59:11, 62:7, 69:23 Nealy [1] - 37:23 necessarily [3] -19:19, 23:3, 23:4 necessary [3] - 71:25, 74:10, 81:12 need [30] - 5:19, 6:7. 7:19. 9:12. 9:13. 11:15, 12:10, 13:2, 26:12, 30:24, 35:18, 35:19, 35:22, 44:1, 44:9, 51:15, 54:2,

58:10.⁴59:13. 60:2. 60:4, 67:25, 68:4, 69:4, 69:19, 69:25, 76:13, 80:21, 82:3 needed [4] - 30:18, 46:15, 56:12, 59:18 needs [2] - 40:23, 51:19 never [13] - 14:17, 15:3, 15:8, 19:10, 19:22, 20:20, 23:15, 24:19, 25:24, 51:4, 52:1, 84:6 new [4] - 12:8, 12:9, 30:16, 84:4 next [2] - 9:11, 21:19 nexus [2] - 19:25, 25:18 Nexus [3] - 48:4, 48:23, 49:7 nieces [1] - 30:21 night [1] - 77:15 nightly [1] - 66:23 nine [2] - 47:17, 48:1 Ninth [2] - 10:4, 82:18 nobody [1] - 39:21 nominal [2] - 72:21, 73:1 none [1] - 7:10 normal [4] - 10:3, 49:17, 83:9, 83:10 normally [2] - 8:7, 57:2 **NORTH** [1] - 2:6 note [3] - 19:13, 21:9,

Note [11] - 22:3, 22:4, 22:10, 22:11, 23:13, 23:14, 36:15, 36:19, 36:21, 55:8, 57:18 noted [2] - 42:10, 57:24 nothing [4] - 17:19, 27:15, 34:7, 37:17

58.14

notice [4] - 15:11, 15:16, 82:2, 83:6 Notice [9] - 80:17, 81:6, 81:8, 81:19, 81:25. 82:11. 82:17. 82:20, 83:13

notify [1] - 77:19 notwithstanding [1] -47:21 November [1] - 58:19

nowhere [1] - 17:10 number [12] - 5:11, 8:10, 18:2, 32:25, 36:9, 36:11, 54:11, 56:3, 56:5, 57:6, 63:1, 77:1

Number [1] - 73:17 numbered [2] - 37:18

0 O'Donald [1] - 4:12 oath [1] - 27:10 obituary [1] - 50:10 objection [9] - 11:19, 12:4, 12:19, 12:21, 12:22, 21:20, 54:5, 54:8, 83:12 objections [6] - 8:10, 8:11, 8:20, 15:15, 18:19, 71:15 objects [1] - 25:10 obligation [1] - 75:6 **obstruct** [1] - 46:8 obstructed [1] - 53:3 obstruction [9] -43:25, 44:3, 44:13, 49:22, 57:5, 57:7, 57:9, 57:19, 57:23 obtain [2] - 25:6, 76:25 obviously [17] - 10:14, 11:5, 12:9, 12:19, 16:9, 22:16, 22:22, 24:1, 25:4, 25:10, 25:17, 53:2, 66:18, 69:5, 69:7, 81:19, 83:14 ocean [2] - 53:5, 53:15 **OF** [15] - 1:2, 1:7, 1:15, 2:4, 2:4, 2:9, 2:10, 85:5, 85:11, 85:14, 85:17, 85:20 Offender [5] - 12:6, 13:13, 35:5, 54:25, 55:1 offense [13] - 11:3, 11:9, 11:10, 23:9, 58:21, 59:12, 59:14, 59:23, 60:5, 69:24, 70:1, 70:9, 71:10 offenses [3] - 15:6, 60:4, 70:12 offered [1] - 43:4 Office [4] - 74:17, 75:24, 76:20, 78:3 **OFFICE** [1] - 2:4 office [1] - 79:19 officer [17] - 75:12, 75:16, 75:21, 76:4, 76:5, 76:10, 76:17, overshadowed [1] -76:24, 77:6, 77:10, 71:7

77:15, 77:16, 77:19,

77:20, 78:1, 78:10,

OFFICES [1] - 2:10

OFFICIAL [3] - 1:21,

85:10, 85:23

old [1] - 70:22

Olivia [1] - 20:24

ON [2] - 2:4, 2:9

once [6] - 29:20,

62:11, 64:24, 65:1,

officially [1] - 36:1

79:18

65:9. 82:11 one [36] - 4:23, 8:17, 93 8:18, 8:19, 12:11, 13:21, 15:2, 16:8, 17:11, 17:16, 23:6, 25:13, 31:3, 35:13, 40:11, 40:16, 41:9, 41:24, 42:10, 43:11, 44:2, 45:21, 47:13, 49:16, 51:8, 51:22, 58:22, 59:5, 61:13, 63:1, 63:2, 70:21, 74:15, 75:9, 81:1, 83.22 one-third [1] - 41:24 open [5] - 18:17, 44:8, 45:5, 46:7, 46:11 opened [1] - 48:8 operates [1] - 82:15 **opportunity** [4] - 9:24, 20:7, 22:3, 36:4 option [1] - 13:20 order [7] - 8:14, 13:3, 17:3, 17:6, 73:7, 81:9, 82:4 Order [5] - 60:13, 73:16, 74:17, 74:21, 79:17 ordered [7] - 72:3, 72:10, 73:1, 73:4, 73:11, 75:5, 76:7 orders [1] - 74:24 ordinarily [2] - 57:19, 83.5 organization [2] -42:5, 53:12 organized [2] - 42:3, 52:11 organizer [5] - 14:6, 40:22, 43:21, 56:20, 56:21 organizers [1] - 41:11 ostrich [1] - 38:10 otherwise [1] - 47:19 out-of-pocket [3] -23:24, 39:22, 40:1 out-patient [1] - 75:14 outset [2] - 11:23, 54:18 overall [2] - 10:9, 41:5 overarching [2] - 8:17, 9:11

owed [1] - 39:17

own [12] - 16:17, 19:5,

43:6, 43:14, 47:22,

48:3, 52:4, 66:17,

owner [2] - 48:3, 48:8

owned [1] - 65:7

67.8

19:20, 41:17, 42:24,

Ρ

P.M [1] - 4:3 Pacer [3] - 37:11, 42:20, 45:17 **PAGE** [2] - 3:2, 85:16 page [7] - 37:11, 41:14, 42:20, 42:21, 45:17, 45:18 paid [2] - 39:21, 72:13 Pain [1] - 71:3 pain [4] - 62:10, 66:10, 66:18, 67:2 Pamela [1] - 37:22 paper [2] - 8:21, 51:23 papers [7] - 6:1, 9:17, 15:13, 16:9, 22:1, 51:1, 77:12 paragraph [6] - 45:14, 48:2, 48:18, 49:3, 50:1, 50:8 paranoia [2] - 30:9, 62:13 parents [3] - 57:11, 63:23, 64:4 parents' [3] - 50:20, 52:6, 52:8 part [13] - 21:15, 34:10, 36:14, 44:25, 45:1, 46:20, 53:12, 58:6, 63:3, 63:25, 68:24, 76:6, 80:9 partial [1] - 73:5 participant [1] - 40:25 participants [4] -41:10, 41:19, 43:23, 56:19 participate [3] - 61:16, 75:13, 77:22 participation [1] -74:7 particular [7] - 10:9, 15:2, 18:18, 23:14, 35:13, 56:16, 57:17 particularly [4] -70:10, 70:14, 80:7, 84:18 parties [14] - 5:8, 5:11, 5:13, 6:1, 8:19, 8:24, 11:15, 11:23, 38:12, 54:13, 60:6, 60:22, 69:18, 71:15 partner [1] - 42:23 parts [1] - 49:16 party [1] - 30:12 passed [2] - 30:11, 61.14 passing [1] - 64:2 passport [1] - 77:2 past [1] - 47:14 patch [1] - 75:16 patience [3] - 13:8, 84:17, 84:19 patient [2] - 66:14, 75:14

pauperis [1] - 81:4 pay [11] - 64:17, 72:3, 72:10, 73:12, 73:19, 73:20, 74:23, 76:6, 76:11, 76:22, 81:2 payee [1] - 73:6 paying [2] - 48:14, 49:4 payment [8] - 73:3, 73:5, 73:6, 73:7, 74:25, 76:9, 76:10, 76:11 payments [4] - 72:21, 72:24, 73:1, 73:13 penalties [1] - 73:13 pending [1] - 50:18 people [7] - 38:8, 41:5, 43:13, 67:4, 69:4, 69:6, 69:8 per [8] - 47:17, 47:24, 48:20, 51:8, 72:7, 72:17, 75:12, 76:19 percentage [1] - 73:7 perform [1] - 76:18 performing [3] -47:19, 48:11, 52:16 perhaps [5] - 26:16, 32:24, 40:8, 58:24, 82:6 period [10] - 48:11, 55:19, 71:7, 72:6, 72:16, 72:22, 74:22, 75:19, 76:8, 84:9 periodic [1] - 75:11 perjury [1] - 27:15 persistence [1] -70.11 person [8] - 22:18, 31:13, 36:14, 48:11, 49:17, 63:1, 66:8, 77:11 person's [1] - 14:13 personal [2] - 19:22, 30.6 persons [2] - 15:6, 41:18 pertaining [1] - 74:25 pertinent [2] - 21:3, 59:25 Phoenix [3] - 48:8, 48:25, 49:1 phone [6] - 13:2, 13:3, 26:20, 31:12, 32:5, 61:2 pieces [1] - 70:21 pills [1] - 66:23 pinning [1] - 50:23 place [2] - 27:10, 75:22 placed [2] - 74:13, 78:19

places [2] - 24:3

Plaintiffs [1] - 1:8

PLAINTIFFS [1] - 2:4

planning [1] - 70:12

plans [5] - 62:8, 63:7,

63:23. 64:5. 65:8 **plate** [1] - 43:9 play [3] - 10:7, 12:10, 38:10 plea [6] - 58:2, 80:2, 80:5, 80:9, 80:10, 80:12 pleading [1] - 40:3 **plus** [2] - 43:17, 43:22 Plus [2] - 40:4, 40:6 pocket [3] - 23:24, 39:22, 40:1 podium [1] - 8:3 Point [5] - 12:6, 13:12, 35:5, 54:25, 55:1 point [18] - 5:19, 13:21, 17:7, 17:9, 17:17, 17:22, 19:16, 33:12, 34:8, 35:15, 39:11, 45:11, 47:2, 51:22, 55:3, 55:4, 58:17, 82:12 pointed [3] - 41:6, 54:19, 57:6 points [5] - 11:16, 13:14, 13:15, 34:10 **poise** [1] - 52:22 poised [1] - 42:4 police [10] - 16:12, 16:18, 16:19, 16:21, 17:16, 17:18, 17:23, 18:9, 19:5, 49:18 policy [1] - 59:25 portion [5] - 8:4, 18:16, 34:2, 44:2, 81:11 position [15] - 6:1, 8:21, 15:22, 21:20, 21:24, 22:8, 22:20, 23:7, 35:20, 36:3, 41:8, 55:6, 55:13, 76:22, 77:8 **Position** [1] - 18:4 **possess** [1] - 76:25 possession [2] -19:18, 20:13 possibilities [1] - 57:6 possible [2] - 82:9, 82:10 Postal [1] - 4:12 potential [1] - 52:19 poverty [1] - 51:25 power [1] - 55:10 practice [3] - 49:2, 49:24, 49:25 precipitated [1] - 71:6 prefer [2] - 8:13, 8:14 preliminary [2] - 6:25, 8:17 prepare [1] - 81:6 preponderance [9] -

prescription [1] -75:18 present [5] - 4:14, 6:11, 55:9, 55:11, 80:14 presentation [1] -33:16 presentence [12] -6:3, 6:4, 6:5, 8:9, 38:12, 58:15, 58:24, 78:3, 78:7, 78:11, 78:14, 79:20 **PRESIDING** [1] - 1:5 **Pretrial** [4] - 74:16, 75:24, 76:20, 78:2 prevented [2] - 51:8, 53:8 previous [1] - 78:11 previously [2] - 17:15, 43.4 pride [1] - 19:17 primarily [1] - 56:6 priority [1] - 73:7 **prison** [1] - 46:8 Prisons [7] - 72:8, 72:18, 74:4, 74:7, 74:9, 79:20, 79:21 private [3] - 22:8, 23:7, 53:17 privately [1] - 5:20 probate [1] - 42:6 Probation [10] - 10:14, 11:17, 13:12, 34:20, 47:24, 58:23, 74:16, 75:24, 76:20, 78:2 probation [17] - 74:18, 75:12, 75:16, 75:20, 75:23, 76:4, 76:5, 76:10, 76:17, 76:24, 77:6, 77:10, 77:16, 77:25, 78:10, 79:18 probation's [1] - 6:6 problem [3] - 36:11, 51:3, 51:18 proceed [4] - 12:15, 18:20, 63:24, 83:13 proceeding [6] - 6:13, 6:14, 34:4, 44:9, 82:6, 84:23 PROCEEDINGS [2] -1:15, 85:15 proceedings [2] -80:4, 81:12 proceeds [3] - 24:10, 42:12, 53:18 process [8] - 10:22, 15:3, 15:15, 28:25, 39:5, 64:25, 82:12, 83:9 processed [1] - 64:19 processing [1] - 68:8 professional [1] -

program [6] - 75:15, 94 75:23, 76:3, 76:4, 77:24, 78:20 prohibited [1] - 78:8 promising [1] - 50:10 promote [2] - 59:15, 70:1 proof [9] - 9:12, 9:17, 10:5, 10:11, 10:12. 10:23, 11:4, 54:15, 76:9 proper [2] - 24:11, 24:14 property [17] - 21:1, 24:7, 24:10, 24:13, 24:15, 25:3, 25:6, 25:14, 25:23, 40:2, 40:11, 50:4, 50:7, 52:20, 66:9, 73:21, 77:12 proportional [1] - 73:6 protect [4] - 10:24, 59:17, 68:11, 70:3 proud [1] - 84:12 proven [1] - 14:11 provide [12] - 59:15, 59:18, 60:5, 69:12, 70:2, 74:10, 76:9, 76:22, 78:13, 78:21, 79:12, 80:25 provided [7] - 6:2, 10:17, 16:22, 47:20, 79:18, 79:21, 81:1 provider [5] - 77:25, 78:4, 78:8, 78:12, 78:13 provides [2] - 22:7, 24.4 providing [1] - 42:2 provision [1] - 15:19 PSR [4] - 11:19, 45:14, 46:2, 48:2 public [5] - 6:10, 22:9, 23:7, 59:17, 70:3 **puffing** [1] - 42:18 **pull** [3] - 7:12, 7:13, 7:14 punishment [2] -59:16, 70:2 pups [1] - 30:17 purported [3] - 16:10, 17:1, 17:8 purportedly [1] -13:16 purpose [5] - 70:18, 78:16, 84:3, 84:6, 84.16 purposes [5] - 35:2, 67:8, 72:1, 82:5, 82:20 pursuant [6] - 72:7, 72:11, 72:18, 73:14, 73:17, 73:25 PURSUANT[1] -85:12

72:19. 74:8

9:21, 9:23, 10:3,

10:23, 11:12, 38:23,

44:12, 54:17, 58:5

prerequisites [2] -

12:9, 14:11

52:12

- 52:17

professionalizing [1]

Program [3] - 72:9,

Pursuant [1] - 73:9 pursue [1] - 52:12 pushed [1] - 52:3 pushing [1] - 52:14 put [11] - 20:25, 29:5, 37:21, 38:20, 39:14, 41:9, 48:24, 50:20, 55:3, 56:25, 67:25 **putting** [1] - 48:15

Q

qualify [1] - 55:2 quarter [3] - 64:19, 72:7, 72:18 questioned [1] - 77:18 questions [4] - 6:25, 8:17, 46:14, 47:1 quite [5] - 21:15, 23:23, 42:8, 62:12, quote [3] - 34:9, 43:4, 51:15 quotes [2] - 37:12, 41:14

R

raised [3] - 16:9, 19:24, 54:11 rambling [1] - 67:22 ran [1] - 47:19 Randy [1] - 41:17 range [8] - 54:4, 54:12, 58:22, 58:25, 59:3, 59:4, 59:5, 59:22 rate [2] - 72:7, 72:17 rather [1] - 41:21 read [9] - 5:25, 6:17, 7:17, 7:19, 22:5, 22:11, 23:5, 36:22, 36:25 reading [5] - 10:18, 10:21, 55:7, 60:13, 68:6 reads [2] - 23:6, 23:10 real [5] - 25:7, 25:10, 25:11, 38:8, 55:21 realized [1] - 62:11 really [17] - 29:10, 30:15, 32:20, 44:21, 46:11, 48:10, 52:1, 52:10, 53:19, 65:25, 66:2, 66:4, 66:13, 67:11, 68:21, 69:11 Reason [1] - 79:16 reason [10] - 10:8, 16:23, 52:11, 56:16, 58:11. 59:2. 71:20. 77:19, 83:8, 83:15 reasonable [1] - 71:24 reasonably [1] - 52:1

reasons [11] - 8:25,

20:1, 34:3, 40:16, 54:17, 55:16, 56:5, 56:6, 56:9, 58:23, 76:18 rebuttal [1] - 56:7 recanted [1] - 44:19 receive [6] - 7:14, 9:5, 34:9, 35:15, 43:16, received [4] - 16:5, 37:17, 49:1, 75:3 recent [1] - 34:12 recess [5] - 5:16, 33:13, 54:6, 60:16, 60:20 Recess [1] - 60:21 reckless [1] - 50:11 recommendation [3] -6:6, 58:25, 78:21 Recommendations [1] - 18:4 recommended [1] -78:19 recommends [2] -74:6, 74:8 record [26] - 4:19, 4:20, 4:21, 6:15, 17:22, 18:15, 20:25, 34:5, 36:8, 38:21, 45:5, 46:17, 49:7, 49:20, 53:23, 54:13, 55:23, 56:10, 56:25, 57:9, 58:4, 58:9, 60:23, 60:25, 66:3, 81:1 recording [1] - 54:21 records [3] - 42:17, 48:16, 60:3 redisclosure [1] - 78:7 reduction [2] - 12:6, 13.13 85:19

REDUCTION [1] refer [1] - 11:19 reference [2] - 18:5, 45:13 referenced [1] - 10:8 referred [1] - 71:1 referring [2] - 34:14, 70:13 reflect [3] - 25:4, 59:14, 69:25 Reform [1] - 74:1 refrain [1] - 75:7 refunds [1] - 75:3 regard [2] - 20:19, 37:6 regarding [7] - 5:8, 5:9, 28:17, 38:3, 40:24, 45:2, 50:2 register [2] - 70:20, 70:22

regular [1] - 76:22

regulations [1] - 74:16

REGULATIONS [2] -

85:16, 85:20

rehabilitation [2] -51:16, 78:17 related [1] - 79:23 relationship [5] -21:22, 22:18, 23:4, 23:11, 62:7 relationships [1] -22:23 relative [2] - 11:3, 11:9 relatively [3] - 11:5, 13:24, 34:11 release [8] - 59:4, 72:21, 72:23, 74:12, 74:13, 74:19, 75:10, 77:20 released [1] - 83:1 relevant [1] - 14:15 reliability [3] - 11:25, 16:21, 54:24 reliable [1] - 41:16 relied [1] - 22:21 relies [1] - 56:24 relieve [1] - 82:19 rely [1] - 16:24 relying [1] - 38:16 remain [3] - 6:24, 64:19, 79:23 remaining [3] - 79:5, 79:7, 79:10 remains [1] - 72:20 remanded [1] - 79:3 reminder [1] - 70:25 remote [1] - 13:25 remotely [1] - 65:24 renowned [2] - 63:3, 63:4 rentals [1] - 64:16 reopen [1] - 6:11 reopened [1] - 8:5 Reply [1] - 18:3 reply [1] - 16:8 report [21] - 6:3, 6:4, 6:5, 8:9, 16:19, 17:23, 18:10, 38:12, 39:25, 48:2, 58:11, 58:12, 58:15, 58:24, 78:3, 78:7, 78:11, 78:14, 79:21, 79:23, 79:25 REPORTED [1] -85.14 reported [2] - 13:21, 48:4

66:4. 68:1. 81:13 **REPORTER** [3] - 1:21, REPORTER'S [1] -16:12, 16:22, 17:16, 17:18, 18:12, 19:5, returns [1] - 48:19

60:18

reverted [1] - 76:2

review [2] - 6:17, 9:22

reviewed [4] - 5:6, 5:7,

19:6 represented [1] -23:15 request 151 - 81:5. 81:7, 81:24, 81:25 require [3] - 10:23, 23:4, 23:11 required [2] - 11:4, 76:12 requires [2] - 14:5, 77:8 reside [1] - 76:3 residence [3] - 17:5, 51:14, 77:12 Residential [1] - 74:8 residential [2] - 75:22, 78:20 resolve [2] - 5:10, 39:8 respect [26] - 5:17, 14:21, 16:15, 20:1, 24:6, 34:16, 36:5, 36:6, 38:15, 40:21, 41:8, 44:15, 46:15, 54:25, 55:6, 55:15, 56:3, 56:5, 56:18, 57:5, 57:7, 57:14, 59:15, 60:7, 70:1, 81:24 respects [1] - 37:9 respond [4] - 20:7, 22:3, 24:24, 36:4 responds [1] - 49:21 response [2] - 36:9, 38:1 responses [1] - 36:6 Responsibility [2] -72:8, 72:19 responsibility [8] -43:9, 44:16, 44:17, 44:25, 57:15, 57:16, 57:21, 57:25 responsible [1] -62:25 rest [1] - 48:14 restitution [8] - 60:5, 72:11, 72:13, 72:16, 72:20, 73:1, 73:11, 74:24 restraining [2] - 17:3, 17:6 result [1] - 58:6 resulting [1] - 57:19 resume [1] - 13:9 retained [2] - 80:16, 82:25 retire [1] - 65:11 retired [1] - 65:9 return [5] - 5:18, 33:21, 48:13, 48:21,

represent [1] - 22:20

representatives [1] -

7:3. 8:19 95 revised [1] - 6:4 RICO [2] - 15:7 rifles [1] - 51:20 rightfully [1] - 19:24 rights [1] - 80:8 **rip** [1] - 53:6 river [1] - 17:17 road [1] - 84:13 rob [1] - 30:15 Robert [24] - 29:1, 29:4, 29:5, 30:25, 40:2, 40:10, 46:6, 48:10, 50:4, 50:6, 50:22, 52:24, 61:14, 63:2, 65:8, 65:9, 66:7, 66:13, 66:17, 66:21, 69:12, 72:15 Robert's [1] - 64:2 role [6] - 14:3, 14:6, 43:7, 43:8, 43:18, 43:20 room [3] - 30:19, 30:20, 30:22 rule [2] - 10:22, 54:3 rules [4] - 61:17, 61:19, 61:24, 74:15 rulings [1] - 54:14 run [1] - 52:21 running [1] - 43:14 runs [1] - 51:19 S

sake [2] - 38:14, 39:10 sale [8] - 24:10, 26:3. 35:24, 35:25, 50:6, 55:19, 55:20, 55:24 Salinas [1] - 41:6 sample [1] - 75:2 **Samuel** [1] - 46:3 **Santarelli** [1] - 37:13 satisfaction [1] -38:10 saw [1] - 48:6 scammed [1] - 49:8 scams [2] - 49:7, 50:19 scared [1] - 49:18 school [2] - 47:22, 52:10 schooling [1] - 76:17 seal [4] - 18:1, 18:16, 26:12, 34:1 sealed [10] - 6:12, 6:14, 33:24, 34:3, 44:1, 44:25, 45:8, 46:7, 60:23, 71:12 Sealed [2] - 34:4, 60:24 search [4] - 51:13, 52:19, 77:14, 77:21 searches [1] - 50:9 seated [1] - 6:24 Second [4] - 73:16,

reporter [4] - 34:2.

85:10, 85:23

reports [9] - 16:5,

51:11, 78:12

70:5, 70:15

reprehensible [2] -

1:15

73:15, 73:17

77:21

subject [8] - 13:15,

17:3, 18:18, 21:14,

59:25, 60:1, 73:13,

58:17, 62:9

49:2

State [3] - 28:8, 48:6,

state [11] - 4:7, 11:14,

16:5, 19:13, 19:14,

seriousness [5] -

71:10, 84:21

serve [1] - 8:23

served [1] - 9:14

service [2] - 76:19,

59:14, 70:1, 70:8,

smiling [1] - 53:17

smoking [1] - 47:16

sobriety [4] - 47:23,

Smith [1] - 37:23

sober [1] - 51:19

17:5, 17:7, 17:9,

17:15, 19:20, 20:4,

20:10, 20:21, 20:23,

21:14, 21:18, 21:23,

22:21, 23:16, 24:9,

31:14, 40:2, 40:10,

40:20, 46:6, 46:16, 46:21, 48:10, 50:22, 52:25, 55:12, 56:15, 62:8, 72:15 Tascon's [11] - 16:11, 19:1, 19:5, 19:22, 19:25, 21:1, 21:5, 21:15, 50:4, 50:7, tax [4] - 48:16, 48:18, 48:20, 75:3 taxes [2] - 48:14, 76:23 team [2] - 41:17, 43:6 tease [1] - 22:14 technical [1] - 13:8 technology [3] -33:19, 65:25, 66:14 ten [2] - 36:5, 56:8 tend [1] - 48:12 term [3] - 36:13, 74:4, 74:13 terms [5] - 34:22, 46:14, 46:25, 62:13, 74:14 test [1] - 75:9 testing [2] - 75:16, 76:1 tests [2] - 75:11, 75:12 Texas [6] - 16:5, 16:13, 19:6, 29:14, 29:20, 65:10 THAT [2] - 85:12, 85:15 **THE** [196] - 2:4, 2:4, 2:9, 4:4, 4:16, 4:21, 5:23, 5:24, 6:20, 6:23, 7:2, 7:5, 7:8, 7:11, 7:16, 7:17, 7:18, 7:19, 7:21, 7:22, 7:24, 7:25, 8:1, 8:2. 8:16. 9:16. 10:16, 11:22, 12:3, 12:11, 12:23, 12:25, 13:5, 13:6, 13:7, 14:20, 14:25, 15:20, 17:21, 18:6, 18:8, 18:11, 18:14, 18:20, 18:22, 20:6, 21:6, 21:11, 21:19, 22:2, 22:13, 23:1, 23:18, 24:17, 25:21, 26:2, 26:9, 26:16, 26:19, 26:22, 26:23, 26:24, 26:25, 27:1, 27:4, 27:6, 27:7, 27:9, 27:13, 27:16, 27:20, 27:22, 27:24, 28:7, 28:10, 28:14, 28:20, 28:23, 29:7, 30:1, 30:3, 31:8, 31:21, 31:24, 32:1, 32:3, 32:9, 32:12, 32:19, 32:23, 33:3, 33:8, 33:11, 34:13, 34:19, 34:23, 35:1, 35:4,

35:7, 35:16, 35:18, 36:17, 36:24, 37:5, 37:8, 38:1, 38:13, 39:2, 39:10, 40:21, 41:3, 43:24, 44:6, 45:6, 45:10, 45:16, 46:13, 53:22, 54:2, 54:9, 60:10, 60:12, 60:15, 60:22, 61:1, 61:5, 61:10, 61:15, 62:1, 62:3, 62:16, 62:17, 63:11, 63:14, 63:18, 63:19, 63:20, 63:25, 64:1, 64:2, 64:3, 64:6, 64:8, 64:10, 64:14, 65:4, 65:6, 65:13, 65:16, 65:22, 67:10, 67:18, 67:20, 68:3, 68:13, 68:14, 68:16, 68:17, 68:19, 69:10, 69:14, 69:16, 69:18, 69:21, 71:19, 71:23, 73:25, 76:16, 78:25, 79:8, 79:10, 79:16, 80:20, 80:21, 80:23, 80:24, 81:22, 82:22, 82:25, 83:3, 83:11, 83:19, 83:23, 84:1, 85:10, 85:11, 85:13, 85:14, 85:15. 85:16. 85:17. 85:19, 85:20 theft [2] - 49:11, 66:9 themselves [2] -19:11, 42:9

theory [2] - 15:4, 80:14 thereafter [1] - 75:11 therefore [1] - 58:21 Third [1] - 37:15

third [2] - 41:24, 43:12 THIS [1] - 85:18 thousand [2] - 42:16, 51.7 thousands [2] - 64:19, 64:20

three [5] - 37:11, 59:5, 61:11, 61:12, 74:14 three-way [2] - 61:11, 61:12 throw [1] - 45:22

time.. [1] - 8:3

Title [5] - 39:24, 72:1, 72:12. 73:9. 73:14 TITLE [1] - 85:13 **TO** [1] - 85:12 today [6] - 56:7, 58:14, 58:16, 84:17, 84:20, 84:21

together [1] - 55:7 took [3] - 19:14, 30:20, 70:13 top [2] - 29:21, 46:1 total [1] - 58:20 touch [1] - 53:1

towards [1] - 7:13

town [4] + 31:5, 31:17, 31:19, 32:17 tracing [1] - 42:14 tracking [1] - 52:18 tragic [1] - 70:23 training [2] - 59:19, 76:17 TRANSCRIPT [4] -1:15, 85:14, 85:16, 85:18 transcript [3] - 8:4,

55:17, 55:20 travis [1] - 31:17 Travis [2] - 32:7, 32:14 treat [1] - 35:25 treated [2] - 36:2,

transfer [3] - 24:20,

34:2, 80:25

70:15 treatment [19] - 47:12, 51:4, 51:5, 51:19, 59:20, 74:11, 75:14, 75:23, 75:24, 76:3, 76:7, 77:23, 77:25, 78:4, 78:5, 78:8, 78:12, 78:13, 78:20 trespass [1] - 13:21 trial [1] - 83:2 tried [4] - 19:16, 46:8,

50:20, 50:21 tries [1] - 42:24 troubled [1] - 38:5 **TRUE** [1] - 85:13 true [10] - 19:19, 35:4,

36:13, 37:20, 40:13, 55:21, 77:4, 77:5, 84:3, 84:16 trust [11] - 9:13, 19:21, 20:11, 21:21, 21:24,

22:9, 23:7, 35:20, 55:6, 55:13, 79:4 trusted [1] - 22:22 trusts [1] - 42:1

try [1] - 32:24 trying [10] - 21:3, 21:16, 29:11, 29:18, 53:4, 57:12, 57:25,

58:1, 63:16, 65:18 turn [2] - 12:3, 42:8 turned [1] - 50:19

twice [1] - 46:7

62:8, 75:10

tying [1] - 63:22

type [1] - 22:24

44:18

23:10, 45:18, 46:8,

Two [2] - 40:4, 40:6

typically [2] - 15:5,

turning [7] - 8:2, 9:16, 11:14, 23:19, 26:10, 39:11, 43:25 26:20 turns [1] - 53:16

unpaid [2] - 72:5, 72:20 two [8] - 4:4, 4:11,

unreliable [1] - 52:15 unsealed [4] - 6:15, 8:5, 34:5, 60:25 unsuccessful [1] -17:18

untold [1] - 66:18 unusual [1] - 44:17 unwarranted [1] -

60:2 **up** [18] - 12:17, 19:1,

U

U.S [2] - 10:20, 75:23 U.S.C [1] - 59:10 ultimate [1] - 10:10 ultimately [1] - 24:15 unable [3] - 73:19, 80:25, 81:2 unauthorized [2] -49:2, 49:24 uncharged [1] - 11:6 uncontested [1] -

under [13] - 15:18, 18:1, 18:16, 23:23, 25:19, 27:10, 34:20, 48:25, 50:11, 54:15, 56:14, 74:14, 80:6 undermined [1] -

17:14

44:19

understood [15] -5:22, 10:16, 20:8, 20:11, 20:15, 20:23, 21:6, 21:19, 21:21, 23:18, 24:18, 27:16, 28:16, 43:24, 63:2

undisputed [1] - 55:9 unenforceable [1] -80:14 unfortunate [2] -

16:11, 19:3 unfortunately [2] -61:23, 65:23 **UNITED** [10] - 1:1, 1:7, 1:22, 2:4, 85:5,

85:11, 85:13, 85:17, 85:20 **United** [10] - 4:5, 37:13, 72:1, 72:4,

72:12, 73:9, 73:15, 74:16, 79:4, 79:19 unkept [1] - 52:18 unlawful [2] - 75:7, 80:3

unlawfully [2] - 37:2, 55:17

unless [5] - 8:13, 19:11, 54:5, 73:7, 76:23 unlike [1] - 24:9

unlikely [1] - 52:20 unmute [3] - 13:2,

19:23, 25:11, 30:23, 30:24, 31:1, 32:21, 97 35:12, 38:9, 39:20, 43:9, 52:2, 53:5, 53:15, 62:18, 69:17, 83:14 upset [3] - 40:16, 42:13, 42:17 upshot [1] - 18:25

V

urinalysis [1] - 75:15

uses [2] - 10:13, 43:1

user [1] - 47:16

vacation [1] - 53:16 value [12] - 24:15, 24:22, 25:5, 25:17, 26:3, 26:4, 35:25, 36:1, 55:18, 55:21, 55:24 values [2] - 25:7, 25:10

variance [1] - 35:9 various [4] - 8:11, 9:20, 11:15, 38:19 vehicle [1] - 77:12 vender [1] - 62:23 **VENTURA**[1] - 2:11

verifiable [1] - 49:6 verify [1] - 21:13 Versoza [2] - 4:12,

54:20

71:2

Versoza's [1] - 42:13 via [2] - 4:24, 27:25 victim [10] - 22:7, 23:5, 23:12, 27:12, 36:9, 36:14, 37:1, 37:14, 37:20, 62:4 victim's [1] - 59:7

victims [17] - 36:5, 36:11, 37:16, 37:18, 40:3, 40:18, 50:7, 50:10, 52:19, 53:24, 56:3, 56:5, 56:8, 56:9, 56:10, 60:5,

video [1] - 26:20 view [2] - 11:7, 41:4 viewed [1] - 16:2 vocational [1] - 59:19 vs [2] - 1:10, 85:6

W

W-I-L-L-I-A-M-S [1] -28:13 wait [4] - 13:9, 67:24 waive [2] - 60:13, 80:8 waived [3] - 73:11, 73:18, 80:5 waiver [1] - 80:14 waivers [1] - 80:11 waives [1] - 80:10

wake [2] - 30:23, 30:24 walk [1] - 8:12 walked [2] - 30:19, 30:20 wants [1] - 47:17 warnings [1] - 50:12 warrant [2] - 51:13, 77:16 warrants [1] - 40:4 **website** [1] - 48:6 week [1] - 76:19 weight [1] - 12:20 weird [1] - 30:13 well-deserves [1] -43:21 well-funded [1] -19:21 Wells [1] - 39:21 **WEST** [1] - 1:23 **WESTERN** [1] - 1:3 whatsoever [1] - 7:10 white [1] - 71:1 whole [11] - 28:25, 29:9, 29:21, 30:8, 30:13, 33:9, 40:11, 49:5, 62:24, 63:10, 64:24 Wichita [1] - 30:12 widow [1] - 71:4 wife [5] - 17:2, 17:4, 20:13, 46:21, 70:24 wilding [7] - 14:19, 21:23, 23:16, 40:9, 53:1, 57:13, 70:15 Wilding [4] - 50:3, 55:12, 70:16, 72:14 wilding's [3] - 14:15, 39:14, 39:19 Wilkins [1] - 41:6 Williams [34] - 4:24, 17:1, 20:14, 20:21, 26:19, 27:17, 28:12, 31:8, 31:24, 32:19, 37:22, 46:17, 47:4, 53:24, 54:3, 60:17, 60:19, 61:13, 61:15, 61:16, 61:20, 61:23, 63:12, 63:13, 63:14, 63:15, 65:5, 65:16, 68:15 WILLIAMS [34] -26:21, 27:3, 27:19, 27:21, 27:23, 28:6, 28:8, 28:11, 28:19, 28:22, 28:24, 29:8, 31:16, 31:22, 31:25, 32:2, 32:8, 32:11, 32:13, 32:22, 33:2, 33:7, 33:10, 61:4, 62:19, 64:9, 64:12, 64:15, 65:15, 66:20, 67:15, 68:5, 68:24, 69:11 williams [17] - 12:25,

26:13, 26:17, 26:18,

26:24, 28:15, 31:21, 31:24, 61:2, 63:11, 65:4, 65:16, 65:22, 68:17, 68:20, 69:15 Williams' [1] - 17:8 willing [2] - 61:6, 61:16 wills [1] - 37:24 Wills [3] - 38:4, 38:19, 42:1 winnings [1] - 75:4 wish [4] - 5:13, 28:2, 60:6, 84:15 wishes [1] - 69:3 WITH [2] - 85:16, 85:19 withdrawn [1] - 73:22 WITNESS [10] - 26:25, 30:3, 61:10, 62:1, 62:16, 63:19, 63:25, 64:2, 64:6, 65:6 witness [2] - 12:14, 58.1 woman [3] - 17:4, 20:24, 84:5 wonder [1] - 32:23 wonderful [1] - 27:22 wondering [1] - 32:4 word [1] - 17:13 words [5] - 42:25, 43:14, 69:5, 70:5, 70:8 works [1] - 38:11 worth [3] - 19:7, 24:16, 26:7 written [3] - 51:1, 77:6, 77:10

Y

y'all [1] - 28:25 year [5] - 25:12, 29:23, 47:25, 48:5, 48:20 years [8] - 25:12, 47:16, 47:18, 48:1, 49:13, 51:5, 59:5, 74:14 yesterday[1] - 14:9 yourself [2] - 31:7, 68:11

Ζ

Zero [5] - 12:6, 13:12, 35:5, 54:25, 55:1 zero [1] - 20:2 **Zero-Point** [5] - 12:6, 13:12, 35:5, 54:25, 55:1 **Zoom** [11] - 4:24, 4:25, 5:1, 6:9, 12:14, 12:16, 27:25, 32:24, 33:12, 33:14, 33:25

98